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ABSTRACT

This paper contains a study of student attendance problems in the New York City school system. The goals of the study were to determine the degree to which the chancellor's attendance program had been implemented at the school level, to explore some attendance-related issues, and to make recommendations for action by the board of education. Chapter 1 describes the problem of student absenteeism in the New York secondary schools. Chapter 2 discusses the actual study, which involved interviews with attendance officials in 10 percent of the middle, junior high, and high schools in the city. The findings indicated a low level of compliance with the requirement to submit an attendance plan. In addition, few of the plans submitted met the requirements for the chancellor's program. Chapter 3 makes recommendations for the use of resources and personnel by the city's bureau of attendance. The appendix reproduces the questionnaire and explains the methodology used. (Author/LD)

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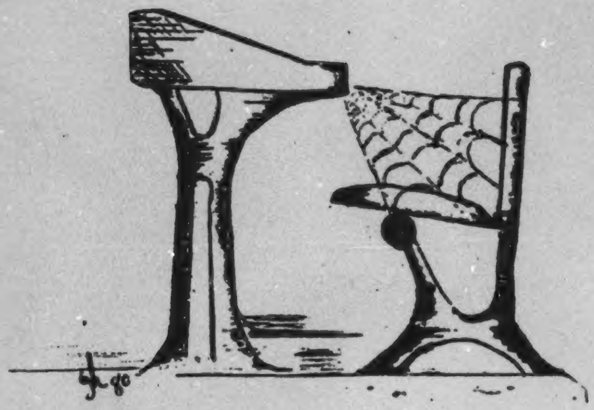
Improving Attendance At *New York City's Public Schools*



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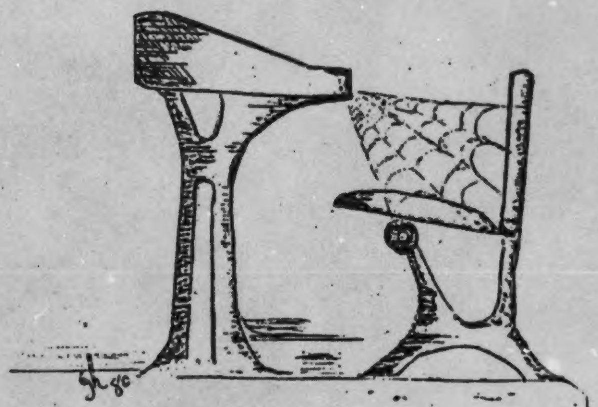

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EMPTY DESKS AT SCHOOL:

IMPROVING ATTENDANCE IN NEW YORK CITY'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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FOREWORD

While most discussions of the city school system, in these days of severe fiscal constraint, focus on the schools' ability to provide quality educational services to its more than 900,000 students, often escaping notice is the ironic fact that 15% of those students are not present each day to receive any services at all.

Budget cuts have had a profound impact on attendance services in New York City schools. The number of attendance teachers has been reduced by half. Another effect of the budget cuts, with perhaps more impact on attendance rates, has been the loss of those special programs, often involving small groups and high costs, that have provided many youngsters with the incentive to stay in school.

The fiscal crisis has put tremendous pressure on schools to reduce costs. The recent emphasis on "clearing the registers" in the high schools raises serious questions about the extent to which students are being "pushed out" of school in order to save money. Even if this is not the case, certainly diminished resources make it more difficult to provide the kind of exciting programming that will keep youngsters in school. In either event, the fact is that the budget is being balanced at the cost of these children's futures.

Attendance services are expensive. Yet not providing them leads to other costs. High absentee rates increase the per pupil costs of educating those who are in school, because the cost of most services does not decrease in proportion to the decline in the number of students who use the service. Even more important, children who attend sporadically need special attention and remedial services in order to enable them to keep up with their peers. Furthermore, state aid to education, ignoring these higher costs related to high absentee rates, is based on average daily attendance, not enrollment. Thus low attendance rates deprive the city's schools of much-needed revenues.

The costs to the city and to society are high also, in terms of increased crime and vandalism and ultimately in terms of a dependent population ill-prepared to lead productive lives.

Attendance must be a school system's first priority. To what end should we provide quality services if children are not in school to take advantage of them? It is the school system's obligation to provide an education to all children, and to do so it must make every effort to bring those children to school. On the other hand, attendance improvement programs cannot ever be successful if the schools do not provide the kind of services that will keep children in school and convince them that attending is worthwhile.

If attendance is our first priority, it is not an end in itself. Providing meaningful quality educational services is both the means for achieving attendance and the goal for which we want children to attend school. While this report primarily addresses strategies for reaching out-of-school youth, it must be kept in mind that the real need is for quality educational programs. Admittedly this will require more resources, and better management and coordination of those resources.

The recommendations of this report serve a two-fold purpose. The first is to improve and increase attendance services. The second recognizes the severe budget reductions already imposed on the school system and the threat of further reductions in instructional services proposed by the Mayor's 1981 Program to Eliminate the Gap. On the premise that savings should be made in non-instructional areas wherever possible in order to protect and enhance classroom instruction, the recommendations in this report point the way toward dollar savings in the Board of Education budget while, at the same time, providing increased attendance services to children.

If our hard-pressed school system is to survive, it must begin to aggressively seek innovative ways to maximize its resources. It is in the hopes of inspiring fresh discussion of entrenched methods of operation that the Educational Priorities Panel has conducted this study.

SUMMARY

I. Problem

Absenteeism from the city's public schools is a serious problem, being greater than any other district in the State and greater than the average for the nation's largest cities. Furthermore, these measurements do not reflect those who have dropped out of school or have been removed from the registers -- 45% of ninth grade students do not finish high school, according to the New York City Board of Education.

Children are truant for a variety of complex reasons usually related to feelings of not belonging -- home environment, irrelevance of the educational program, teachers' attitudes, academic and social failure. Nevertheless, school personnel interviewed for this study most consistently offered "weather conditions" as the reason for truancy.

Certain fiscal problems have exacerbated absenteeism. Programs to encourage attendance have been cut. Furthermore, there are several fiscal disincentives built into the formulas that govern the distribution of funds to the high schools and the districts that make it more advantageous for the superintendent or principal not to pursue long term absentees. High absentee rates also make it easier for a principal to plan for large classes and meet a limited budget.

II. The Chancellor's Attendance Plan

In September, 1978 the Chancellor of Schools issued a program to improve attendance by:

1 - standardizing and simplifying recording procedures

2 - requiring attendance plans from every school and district that

would outline attendance programs and meet certain requirements

3 - offering resources for the development and implementation of these programs

Researchers for the current study surveyed 10% of the middle, junior high and high schools in the city to determine the extent of their compliance with the plan and the nature of the programs they had established. This study made no attempt to evaluate existing attendance programs, nor have any formal evaluations been made by the Board of Education.

Findings

1 - There was a very low level of compliance with the requirement for schools and districts to submit an attendance plan.

2 - Of those plans that were submitted, few met the requirements for such a plan as outlined in the Chancellor's manual, such as needs assessments, goals, specific programming, staffing and evaluation.

3 - Most of the schools had committees on attendance, but few met regularly or included parent or student representation.

4 - Staff training on attendance, where it is provided, has been devoted to clerical duties.

5 - The number of attendance teachers varied from one to five per district.

6 - A Chancellor's memo requiring the clearance of the registers of any students who did not attend school as of October 30, 1979 after substantial efforts to find the student had been made resulted in the premature and illegal discharge of an estimated 1500 students in the sample schools alone.

Recommendations

1 - The Board of Education should conduct a sophisticated analysis and evaluation of the success of school-based attendance programs.

2 - Compliance with the Chancellor's Attendance Program must be improved. The borough superintendents should monitor the design and implementation of an effective attendance plan for each high school. In the districts, the district attendance coordinator supplemented by the Chancellor's Task Force should have monitoring responsibility. A systems-wide conference on attendance could increase commitment to the program and provide an opportunity to share successful strategies and possibly to revise the Chancellor's program in light of experiences to date.

3 - No student should be discharged until all efforts to locate the student have been made and documented. All cases of illegal discharge should be re-opened and re-evaluated.

4 - Each school must provide programs which will attract students to school. Attendance and school programs cannot be separated. The principal should cultivate this attitude, and teacher training must be conducted to emphasize the teacher's pivotal role in encouraging attendance.

5 - Attendance services to out-of-school youth should be provided through purchase of service agreements with community-based organizations throughout the city.

The Chancellor's Program does not address the problem of reaching out to children not in school. The Division of High School's Retrieval Centers begin to address the needs of these youngsters, but using the existing network of community-based organizations (CBO's) has many advantages. Services to out-of-school youth should be provided in the communities in which they live, not in the schools they are not attending.

a) Services for out-of-school youth are not generally available in the school system, especially in the districts.

b) The Board of Education may not be the most appropriate deliverer of outreach attendance services. Its methods and staffing are not flexible enough to meet the multi-faceted needs of out-of-school youth.

c) Many CBO's have the experience, the community acceptance and the flexibility of programs and staffing to provide effective outreach services.

Furthermore, improved services could be provided at lesser cost to the city because, if the program is contracted through the Youth Board, State matching funds could be used.

EPP recommends a heterogenous system in which districts could choose between school-based or contracted outreach attendance services. The policy should be phased in gradually with an initial pilot project in only a few districts.

EPP recommends an initial savings of $.5 million during the first stage reflecting a $1 million reduction in school-system-provided attendance services, $.5 million of which should be allotted to the Youth Board for letting contracts to CBO's. With State matching funds, this would provide $1 million worth of services while saving $.5 million of city funds.

III. Use of Resources by the Bureau of Attendance

Recommendations

1 - There must be cooperation and coordination between the Bureau of Attendance and the High School Division in policy-making and in the five high school districts (boroughs).

Decisions should be made together and each must be informed of the others' actions. The high school district superintendents and the district attendance supervisors should coordinate activities. The assignments and scheduling of attendance teachers to high schools must be made by the Bureau of Attendance with High School Division input.

Where possible, attendance teachers should not be removed from direct attendance services to assist in high school placements in the fall. The placement process and articulation between feeder school and high school should be improved. The new Metrolab pupil accounting system should relieve attendance teachers of some clerical duties.

2 - The duties performed by the Chancellor's Task Force should be performed by school-based personnel or by the district or borough office. The assistant principals and attendance supervisors presently on the Task Force are highly paid, only advisory, seen as intrusive by school personnel, have duplicative functions and have not been particularly effective, judging by the attendance plans and the number of illegal discharges. The Task Force members should be redeployed to provide services to children. The principal, assistant principal or attendance coordinator in the school should be trained to monitor clerical duties, while the monitoring of attendance plans can be performed by the district or borough office.

3 - The Special Services Unit (SSU) should be run without Bureau of Attendance personnel. The clerical aspect of the program should be simplified to avoid duplication.

The SSU runs programs at four city locations in conjuntion with John Jay College and the Transit Police to handle truants found on subways. The programs are overloaded by too many truants and a large amount of useless paperwork.

Without highly paid professional personnel, the program can be expanded at no increased cost by using more college students from varied disciplines to provide counselling, referral and placement.

4 - A current and accurate data base should be kept by the Bureau of Attendance on aggregate figures and by the schools on an individual student basis so that potential drop-outs and truants can be identified early.

Such a data base is also important for the design and evaluation of attendance programs.

5 - Classroom teachers should be required to send notices of student absence to parents and absentee referrals to attendance teachers. Teachers assigned to school-wide attendance-related clerical tasks during their administrative periods should work with students instead.

This would personalize attendance as well as save an estimated $1.25 million in reduced number of aides.

These recommendations, if implemented, would improve attendance services at lower cost than is presently expended, an important goal in times of fiscal constraint when all educational dollars must be used to their fullest advantage.

INTRODUCTION

While the New York City public school system struggles to provide educational services to more than 900,000 school children, 163,000 of those children are not present each day to receive those services. This figure does not even include the thousands of youngsters who have dropped out of school or in other ways have disappeared from the roll books.

Chancellor Macchiarola had made attendance a priority for the New York City Board of Education. In September 1978, he announced a new system-wide attendance program, inaugurated with the first revision of the School Attendance Manual since 1958. The Educational Priorities Panel (EPP), having identified attendance issues as a primary area of concern on their overall agenda to improve educational services to New York City's public school children, applauded the Chancellor's initiative and supported these essential first steps to establish minimum requirements for administration and to define the appropriate roles of the members of the school community -- teachers, supervisors, support staff, parents and district and central personnel. Much more, however, remains to be done if the school system is to meet its obligation to educate all our children.

Further attention has been directed to the problems of attendance through the report and hearings of the New York State Senate Minority Task Force on Truancy in the Public Schools of New York City headed by Senators Carl McCall and Albert Lewis. (Bibliography # 31)

The EPP initiated the present study with three major goals: 1) to ascertain the degree to which the Chancellor's Attendance Program had been implemented at the school level; 2) to explore some attendance-related issues which still need to be addressed; and 3) to develop recommendations for further actions at the Board of Education.

This report is divided into three major sections:

1) Attendance in New York City Public Schools -- the problem

2) Implementation of the Chancellor's Attendance Program -- findings and recommendations;

3) The Use of Resources by the Bureau of Attendnace -- findings and recommendations.

An explanation of the study's methodology is included as Appendix A.

CHAPTER I

ATTENDANCE IN NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS -- THE PROBLEM

ATTENDANCE RATES

The average daily attendance rate, like all "objective" statistics, is a figure that can be calculated in a variety of ways to reveal or obscure different factors. According to the Bureau of Attendance, the city-wide average attendance rate for the 1978-79 school year was 84.21%. This figure breaks down by school level as follows:

Level	Percentage of Attendance
Elementary Schools	88.21%
Intermediate/Junior High Schools	84.94%
Academic High Schools	77.59%
Vocational High Schools	82.33%
Alternative High Schools	68.90%
Auxiliary Services for High Schools	61.32%
Special Schools	66.72%
Special Education	68.18%
City-Wide	84.21%

Source: New York City Board of Education, Bureau of Attendance

Table I (pg. 6) details the percentage of attendance for the districts and Table II presents the data for the high schools.

In order to appreciate the magnitude of the attendance problem in New York City schools, it is important to examine attendance in other school districts. According to the most recent information available from the New York State Education Department, in 1977-78, New York City had a lower attendance rate, 83.56%, than any county in the State. The State average for that year was 89.96% and the average for cities was 85.83%. National data from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, National Center for Education Statistics for fall 1978 paints a similarly grim picture. While the national average daily attendance was 93.54% and the average for 20 large cities was 91.13%, the average daily attendance in New York City, according to HEW's method of calculation, was 82.82% of the estimated average daily membership. Of the 12 large cities providing full information, only Boston had a lower attendance rate (see Table III, pg. 10)

It is interesting to note that the statistics for New York City did improve from 1977-78 to 1978-79. (See, for example, the high school data in Table IV, pg. 11). However, because the attendance rates have been calculated in a different manner from year to year, it is difficult to determine exactly how much actual school attendance has increased. For example, there is an annual shift in the treatment of religious holidays. Average daily attendance figures also mask other serious problems.

-- Those students who have dropped out are not reflected in these figures. The Board of Education released a report last fall that cited a 45% drop-out rate in New York City high schools.

-- This year, the Chancellor placed a priority on "clearing the registers" of long-term absentees (see pp.23-24). This will artificially increase the daily attendance rate.

-- The average daily attendance is based on official class, or homeroom attendance. It does not reflect attendance of subject classes in junior high and high schools. In some instances, these figures may be overestimated, counting students who attend homeroom and skip academic classes. However, they may just as easily be underestimated, since we cannot accurately establish the degree of "class-cutting" in most schools.

TABLE I

Average Daily Attendance Rate by District, Elementary and Intermediate/Junior High Schools, 1978-1979

Community School District	District-Wide	Elementary	Intermediate/ Junior H.S.
1	84.70	85.73	82.41
2	90.07	90.60	88.83
3	85.25	85.87	83.65
4	86.24	87.33	83.98
5	86.05	87.54	83.16
6	88.21	88.95	85.79
7	86.05	86.67	84.86
8	85.07	85.91	83.82
9	83.64	84.04	82.66
10	84.80	85.84	82.04
11	88.85	89.71	87.36
12	85.57	86.70	82.08
13	86.94	87.92	83.96
14	86.15	87.24	83.74
15	86.93	87.83	84.35
16	85.66	86.85	81.96
17	85.69	86.99	82.72
18	89.51	90.52	87.57
19	86.50	87.37	84.12
20	86.93	88.91	82.79
21	86.15	87.58	82.96
22	88.16	89.05	85.83
23	84.05	86.06	79.59
32	85.70	86.88	82.82
24	89.22	90.24	87.22
25	90.62	91.62	88.54
26	90.95	91.38	90.06
27	87.12	90.64	83.51
28	88.15	89.14	85.77
29	90.19	91.03	88.30
30	89.09	90.11	86.35
31	89.75	90.58	88.13

Source: New York City Board of Education, Bureau of Attendance

TABLE II

Average Daily Attendance Rate in the High Schools by Percentage and Rank, 1978-1979

Manhattan	Percentage	Rank
Benjamin Franklin	55.91	113
Charles Evans Hughes	67.57	91
Seward Park	73.05	80
Washington Irving	73.52	77
George Washington	74.83	74
Louis Brandeis	78.77	57
Stuyvesant	91.11	3
Julia Richman	71.27	84
Music and Art	85.72	19
Martin Luther King	75.08	70
Murry Bergtraum	88.21	9
Parkwest	63.48	101
Fashion Industries	86.20	18
Chelsea	80.17	50
Norman Thomas	86.61	17
N.Y. School of Printing	74.97	72
Art and Design	88.06	11
Manhattan	60.93	107
Mabel Dean Bacon	89.61	6
Park East	63.87	99
West Side	71.35	83
Lower East Side	70.58	86
Satellite	79.74	51
Harlem Prep	60.73	108
Auxiliary	60.35	110

Staten Island	Percentage	Rank
New Dorp	83.21	33
Port Richmond	83.12	34
Curtis	77.56	65
Tottenville	85.23	23
Wagner	83.36	31
R. McKee	81.77	40

TABLE II continued

Queens	Percentage	Rank
August Martin	88.61	7
Beach Channel	84.40	26
B. Cardozo	82.38	37
Springfield Gardens	84.63	25
John Bowne	84.29	27
Francis Lewis	85.57	21
M. Van Buren	88.55	8
Forest Hills	86.65	16
C. Bryant	80.26	48
Long Island City	85.17	24
Newtown	86.90	14
Flushing	80.46	45
Far Rockaway	78.61	58
Jamaica	88.12	10
Richmond Hill	80.35	47
John Adams	77.94	61
G. Cleveland	82.83	35
A. Jackson	78.02	60
Bayside	82.14	38
Hillcrest	83.47	30
Queens	81.37	43
Aviation	91.43	2
Thomas Edison	87.95	13
Auxiliary	65.04	97
Middle College	84.10	29

Bronx	Percentage	Rank
Morris	66.42	95
Herbert Lehman	73.29	79
W.H. Taft	62.98	104
C. Columbus	80.58	44
Monroe	70.98	85
Evander Childs	71.90	82
Walton	66.99	94
Roosevelt	69.65	87
Clinton	66.03	96
Bronx Science	92.14	1
A. Stevenson	74.88	73
H.S. Truman	81.58	41
South Bronx	74.03	76
J. Kennedy	76.01	67
A.E. Smith	76.37	66
Jane Addams	77.65	63
S. Gompers	72.02	81
G. Dodge	88.04	12
Auxiliary	60.96	106

TABLE II continued

Brooklyn	Percentage	Rank
Lafayette	73.33	78
Midwood	84.11	28
A. Lincoln	78.49	59
S. Tilden	81.90	39
F.K. Lane	68.73	89
J. Madison	83.28	32
Brooklyn Tech.	90.44	5
T. Jefferson	62.55	105
Prospect Heights	67.52	92
New Utrecht	74.54	75
Boys and Girls	64.18	98
John Jay	63.67	100
Erasmus Hall	80.21	49
G. Wingate	75.75	69
Eastern District	59.24	111
Bushwick	67.03	93
Bay Ridge	68.30	90
Ft. Hamilton	78.86	56
Sheepshead Bay	77.80	62
Canarsie	75.01	71
F. Roosevelt	77.57	64
J. Dewey	85.72	20
South Shore	79.29	55
E.R. Murrow	86.75	15
Barton	90.72	4
Sarah J. Hale	69.04	88
G. Westinghouse	85.36	22
Automotive	81.41	42
East New York	80.35	46
W. Grady	79.37	53
A. Hamilton	82.62	36
E. Whitney	79.61	52
W. Maxwell	79.32	54
Auxiliary	63.42	102
Pacific	63.01	103
City-as-School	75.98	68
High School Redirection	56.04	112
P.M. High School	60.72	109

Source: New York City Board of Education, Bureau of Attendance

TABLE III

Average Daily Membership, Average Daily Attendance, Percentage of Attendance: Selected Cities, 1978--1979

	1978-79 School year		
Large Cities	Estimated ADM	Estimated ADA	Percentage of Attendance
Total 50 States and D.C.	41,945,000	39,234,000	93.50
Total 20 cities	4,034,000	3,676,000	91.13
Percent of U.S. total	9.6	9.4	
Baltimore, MD	144,173	124,307	86.22
Boston, MA	68,088	55,941	82.16
Chicago, IL	NO	REPORT	
Cleveland, OH	97,802	87,043	89.00
Dallas, TX	134,021	119,681	89.30
Detroit, MI	NA	211,974	---
Houston, TX	200,436	180,868	90.24
Indianapolis, IN	71,164	64,724	90.95
Los Angeles, CA	NA	607,928	---
Memphis, TN	115,535	105,698	91.49
Milwaukee, WI	NO	REPORT	
New Orleans, LA	87,450	76,300	87.25
New York, NY	949,680	786,525	82.82
Philadelphia, PA	250,000	216,000	86.40
Phoenix, AZ	NA	NA	---
St. Louis, MO	NA	66,267	---
San Antonio, TX	63,387	57,161	90.18
San Diego, CA	NA	113,860	---
San Francisco, CA	NA	61,952	---
Washington, D.C.	112,719	94,502	83.84

Source: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare,
National Center for Educational Statistics.

TABLE IV

Comparison of Attendance Rates for New York City High Schools; 1977-1978; 1978-1979

Borough Averages - Academic High Schools

	1977-1978	1978-1979
Manhattan	75.10	75.43
Bronx	70.94	73.27
Brooklyn	73.42	75.57
Queens	81.47	83.45
Staten Island	81.54	83.04

Borough Averages - Vocational High Schools

	1977-1978	1978-1979
Manhattan	78.46	81.92
Bronx	77.75	79.73
Brooklyn	80.12	81.15
Queens	86.69	88.15
Staten Island	79.16	81.77

Source: New York City Board of Education, Bureau of Educational Statistics.

TYPES OF TRUANTS

Truants, those who stay away from school without permission, fall into several categories:

-- The Long-term Absentee (LTA)

The problem of the LTA is a difficult one to define because of conflicting information on which groups of students fall into this category. An LTA at the Division of High Schools becomes a "no show" at the Office of Educational Statistics. These students are not supposed to be removed from the register until they have been absent for two consecutive months. Often, however, they are removed from subject classes after only one month. In interviewing Attendance Coordinators in the schools, definitions of LTA's vary considerably from school to school and even among attendance personnel within schools.

-- The Intermittent Absentee

These students comprise the bulk of the attendance problem in the schools. These students generally attend several times per week but not regularly. In a class of 40 students, 30 students may attend daily, but they are a different mix of students each day. This pattern presents difficulties for both students and teachers in progressing steadily through the term's curriculum.

-- The Cutters

These are the students who attend classes selectively. They can often be found in and around the school buildings but may only attend 2 to 5 periods.

WHY STUDENTS ARE TRUANT

One of the basic functions of an education system is to provide the means for self-improvement and to provide the sure and legitimate path to the "better life." The critical nature of the role of education in this culture is widely recognized:

> Where a person will live. whom he will marry, the kind of job he will hold, the well-being of his children, indeed, where he will be buried, are closely connected with the kind of formal education he receives. (Bibliography # 8)

The education laws of the State of New York are based on this concept of education not only as an asset but as a right.

> It shall be the duty of each attendance teacher and each attendance supervisor to secure for every child his right to educational opportunities which will enable him to develop his fullest potentialities for education, physical, social and spiritual growth as an individual (Sec. 3213).

If education is held in such high regard in our culture, what accounts for the apparent indifference to education by a large number of school-aged children? The answer to this question is a complicated one. It admittedly includes some factors beyond the school's control, including severe familial and environmental stress, substance abuse, etc. However, it is clear that the schools must take responsibility for a significant part of the problem.

Problems will arise in any system which becomes so rigid that it cannot allow for individual differences. The problem of truancy is one manifestation of this phenomenon. Much of the literature of truancy indicates that a significant factor in a child's decision to become truant is his/her feelings of isolation combined with the coping abilities and strengths he/she brings to that situation (6, 22, 36). The origins of this sense of "not belonging" may differ across economic, racial or geographic boundaries but the response of the system is generally the same — exclusion.

First, a child entering the school system brings to it his or her own individual strengths and limitations based on support systems available in the home and community. The student also evaluates educational offerings according to previous experiences and those of others in his or her family and neighborhood. Often students perceive the education being offered as irrelevant to their lives and their future prospects. This can be the beginning of the feeling of "not belonging".

Added to this are the attitudes of teachers and other pedagogues toward vulnerable persons. This vulnerable group includes all persons, regardless of economic standing, race, or social clan who perceive themselves as "not belonging" or isolated from the educational system. Several studies have been conducted on the relationship between teacher attitudes and drop-out rates. The overall finding is that teachers play a critical role in the quality of pupils' school experience and in their decisions to drop out (3,5,6,29). Specifically, Florence Barton in her study Do Teachers Cause Drop Outs? (2) interviewed an extensive number of students from varying economic and cultural backgrounds. The findings of the study revealed that the teacher is the most significant influence in the school that can cause students to drop out. The correlation between truancy and dropping out has been documented as well (20,44,45).

Another critical factor in a youngster's decision not to attend school is his/her academic and social experiences at school. If a student is unable to experience success in any area of his school experience he is unlikely to keep attending. It has been documented that the drop-out rate is highest in large urban areas such as New York where the number of students scoring below minimum competency is also greatest (6).

One of the striking findings from the interviews with school personnel conducted for this study was their underestimation of the complicated nature of the reasons that students are truant. The most consistent response, given by 95% of attendance personnel in the school (including principals and attendance coordinators), to the question of reasons for truancy was weather conditions for students traveling long distances. The second most common response was that children came from multi-problem families. Only 5 of the ninety-three school based attendance personnel interviewed mentioned inadequacy of school programms or the failure of the sytem to provide students with what they needed.

FISCAL PROBLEMS

In addition to these individual factors contributing to the problems of truancy, there are those factors that stem from the schools' fiscal problems.

The fiscal crisis has meant that many special programs that may have provided students with the incentive to stay in school have been cut, especially in the high schools which have sustained the greatest budget reductions since 1975. The most recent example of program losses were the proposed small setting programs designed in response to the Chancellor's report on drop-outs. These were cut back before they were due to open in February 1980 because of the mid-year deficit of the 79-80 school year.

Furthermore, built into the formula that governs the allocation of funds to the district and the high schools are disincentives for improving attendance.

The student register is a significant determiner of the level of funding that schools and districts receive from the central Board of Education. However, for the basic allocation formula, registers are "adjusted" to remove long term absentees (LTAs), providing no resources for these students if they return . Generally, an LTA returning to school requires additional guidance and instructional service to ease the re-entry process. The costs of these services, however, are not reflected in the allocation formula until the following year. Therefore, the services provided to the returned students must be provided from the already limited funds provided for students on the allocation register. The limited funds for outreach that are now being provided for LTA's are grossly inadequate.

In addition, because of the practice of removing students from subject-class registers up to a month before they are removed from the allocation register, funds are allocated for a significant number of students who do not receive classroom services.

Further, there is no fiscal incentive to return the LTA to the school system once he/she has been removed from the allocation register.

Another aspect of the fiscal disincentive problem is evident in the treatment of the intermittent absentee population. Because of contract restrictions and severe budget restraints, the intermittent absentee situation is tolerated by school officials and teachers alike. Class size grievances brought by teachers are settled on the basis of the number of attending students, not the number of students on the registers. Therefore, a register of 40 or 50 is tolerated as long as fewer than 32 students attend daily. A high truancy rate may offer a principal an easy answer to the combined pressures of a limited budget and a rigorous teacher contract. There is also no fiscal incentive to increase class attendance to the point at which more classes would be required because there would be no increase to fund additional classes. The intermittent absentees are often the students enrolled in grossly oversized classes, with the assumption that they will not attend -- an assumption that can be self-fulfilling.

CHAPTER II

THE CHANCELLOR'S ATTENDANCE PROGRAM -- FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE CHANCELLOR'S ATTENDANCE PROGRAM

In a memorandum to the Board of Education dated September 29, 1978, the Chancellor summarized the growing problem of absenteeism in the New York City public schools and his response to it:

> The rate of attendance at our schools is an important indicator of their effectiveness in meeting the needs of the students they serve. A comprehensive program to improve attendance in New York Public Schools is, therefore, a high priority during the school year 1978-1979.

The Chancellor's plan to address the problem was outlined in four parts:

Part I: Minimum Standards of Procedure and Administration

-- Administrative and recording procedures to provide principals and other administrators with the means to monitor attendance and identify children in need of counseling.

-- Simplification of pupil accounting and attendance reporting procedures.

-- A new handbook to further detail these procedures.

Part II: Minimum Standards for Attendance Program

-- Each school must take responsibility for its own attendance.

— An attendance coordinator must be designated.

-- Schools must annually submit an attendance plan and thereafter adhere to it.

-- Each school must develop a committee on attendance which should include supervisors, teachers, paras, guidance and attendance personnel and parents.

-- The function of the committee is to provide guidelines and suggest modifications.

Part III: Special School Based Programs

-- Each school will be required to develop a program to deal with its particular attendance problems.

-- Schools will be assisted in this area by the new resource manual.

-- Each school will be expected to create from the resources provided a specific program that addresses the attendance problems endemic to that particular school.

Part IV: Resources and Incentives

This part of the plan begins with a general statement of the need to provide schools with necessary resources in terms of personnel and expertise and the need to reward successful applications of programs with additional resources and positive performance evaluations. More specifically, it states that:

-- During 1978-1979 schools would be provided with resources that would enable them to design and implement attendance improvement programs and have these programs securely in place by 1979-1980.

-- During 1979-1980 the Board would begin to allocate fiscal and other resources and provide rewards for the more successful programs.

-- The Bureau of Attendance would be reorganized during 1978-1979 in order to provide more efficient and effective services to schools.

-- The work of the Bureau should be concentrated in the area of:

a. training and supervision of school personnel and other attendance personnel.

b. reviewing attendance plans and working with schools and districts to improve their plans.

c. timely monitoring of attendance procedures throughout the system.

d. follow up of referrals on truants in the Division of High Schools and Special Education.

-- The Office of Educational Statistics would be implementing a program for the collection and dissemination of attendance data.

-- Metropolitan Educational Laboratory would phase in, beginning by Fall, 1979, an automated system for all pupil accounting information.

-- The Bureau's forces would immediately be augmented by a special task force of attendance supervisors and other personnel to:

a. assist schools in the establishment of basic procedures that are uniform city-wide.

b. train school secretaries in use of new forms.

c. monitor newly developing programs and assist school in implementing these programs.

d. coordinate technical services and work to facilitate cooperation among units within the school system, city agencies and private agencies.

-- An attempt would be made during 1978-79 school year to set baseline attendance rates for each school and district which would accurately predict attendance rates for a specified district.

-- An indexing system would be developed to correct year-to-year variations in attendance due to outbreaks of illness, etc. The system would be the basis for setting goals and measuring programs which is a prerequisite for the reward based incentive programs.

-- The Bureau of Attendance would be responsible for ensuring that the attendance plan is implemented by every school and district and report to the Chancellor regularly on the status of the implementation of the plan in each school and district.

The Chancellor's plan represents a commitment to improving attendance. The Education Priorities Panel examined the commitment on the school level and the degree to which the Chancellor's program has been successfully implemented.

THE SURVEY

EPP staff visited 28 intermediate, junior high schools and high schools between November 13 and December 20, 1979 (see Appendix A, Methodology). These constituted a 10% sample of the middle schools and high schools in New York City. The sample schools reflected a wide range of student populations and attendance problems. The school profiles (see Appendix B), demonstrate the broad spectrum represented in the study. The site visits and extended interviews established the variety among the schools in terms of programming and their response to attendance issues.

We have not attempted to evaluate individual schools nor to establish any causal relationship between specific administrative and/or programmatic practices and attendance rates. As evidenced by the interview guides (Appendix A), the study was restricted to a description of the attendance situation in each school, a detailed discussion of attendance-related activities at the school, and a point-by-point investigation of the implementation of the Chancellor's Attendance Program as set forth in the "School Attendance Manual." Although the staff did have the opportunity to observe classes and specific activities in several schools, the analysis was restricted to information that was gathered during the interviews. There was no attempt to verify either the regularity of activities or their effectiveness.

As described in the previous chapter, truancy is a complex issue. Considering the diversity among the populations at the survey schools, it would be simplistic and misleading to attempt to link any single practice with the resulting attendance rates. For example, the two junior high schools which were in least compliance with the Chancellor's Program represented the best and worst attendance rates in our sample. Non-compliance was attributed in one case to the absence of any need, and in the other case to the lack of resources in a school that was oppressed by too many other needs. Clearly, one cannot draw any simple conclusions regarding the impact of the Chancellor's program, or, for that matter, the success of any specific program.

However, a sophisticated analysis and evaluation of the success of school-based attendance programs must be undertaken by the Board of Education. Obviously, before identifying successful programs for replication throughout the system, we must identify the extent of such programming. The findings that follow document the degree to which the Chancellor's Attendance Program has been implemented on the school level and the characteristics of school activities relating to attendance.

The findings do not attest to the success or failure of the Chancellor's plan, since no longitudinal analysis was conducted. It is very possible that attendance has improved in some schools, and this would not be revealed by this study.

In the following section, the relevant findings are grouped according to the requirements of the attendance plan. The findings are based on information from 28 schools, including 17 middle junior high schools and 11 high schools.

FINDINGS

- Both schools and districts are supposed to annually submit an attendance plan.

1) Nineteen community school districts of those surveyed (59%) did not submit a district attendance plan to the Bureau of Attendance.

2) In only 22% of the districts did all of the schools submit plans.

3) No plans at all were submitted from three districts.

4) For the remaining 29 community school districts, individual schools submitted plans as follows:

   - 100% of the schools submitted in seven districts;
   - 90-100% of the schools submitted in five districts;
   - 80-90% of the schools submitted in three districts;
   - 50-80% of the schools submitted in five districts; and
   - less than 50% of the schools submitted in nine districts.

5) Every one of the schools included in the survey purported to have an attendance plan. However, copies of the plan were not available at four junior high schools and two high schools, or 21% of the schools surveyed.

- Each attendance plan should consist of a needs assessment, short and long range objectives, specific programs to improve attendance, staffing requirements and evaluation.

6) Only three schools (11%) had conducted a needs assessment.

7) At eleven of the schools (39%), there was no mention either in the interviews or in the written plan of programming or instructional or support services for students with attendance problems. At another

five schools (18%), programming was included in the written plan, but never alluded to in response to interview questions.

8) Only nine schools (32%), including seven high schools, had programs for long-term absentees. Only seven schools (25%), including six high schools, had a special program aimed at "intermittent" absentees. Only one high school had a program directed at the problem of classcutting. Only six schools (21%) were specifically addressing the need for early identification of attendance problems. Finally, only ten schools (36%), three junior high schools and seven high schools, had any special classes for students with attendance problems.

9) Seventeen (61%) of the schools knew of programs within the community that dealt with attendance-related problems and fifteen of these schools did refer students to the community services.

° The plan should be developed in consultation with a Committee on Attendance (COA) which should include teachers, pupils, parents, supervisors and community persons. The committee are to meet regularly, advise the principal and maintain minutes and membership lists.

10) Only eight of the schools in the survey (29%) had involved students in the development of the plan. There was more effort to do this at the high school level, including five (45%) of the high schools.

11) Parents were involved in the development of the attendance plan at nine (32%) of the schools. However, in this case, the effort was more common at the junior high school level, where seven schools (41%) included parents in this activity.

12) All of the high schools and 82% of the junior high schools had Committees on Attendance. Three junior high schools had no COA.

13) Only six schools (21%) had regular meetings of the COA. Two COA's had not met at all during the 1979-80 school year and at ten schools, the date of the last COA meeting was "not available" from the interview respondents.

14) Only six COA's (21%) included parent representation. Only five schools (18%) included students on the COA: three high schools and two junior high schools.

° The school based plan is to be submitted to the appropriate superintendent for approval. Plans are also to be made available for review by the Chancellor's Task Force on Attendance.

15) Just under half of the schools (12 or 43%) had received input or information from either the community school district office or the high school borough superintendent. Seven, or only 25% of the schools, had been called to district meetings on attendance and only two junior high schools (12%) had ever reviewed the district attendance plan.

16) Twenty-two of the schools (79%) had submitted their attendance plans for review to at least one of the following: borough superintendent, community school district staff, Chancellor's Task Force. None of the schools, however, had gone through a revision process or received formal comments.

17) The Chancellor's Task Force had visited sixteen of the junior high schools (94%).

° The classroom teacher is to be directly involved in the improvement of attendance.

18) Only nine schools (six junior high schools and three high

schools) noted responsibilities other than clerical duties as the classroom teacher's responsibilities regarding attendance.

19) Only one school surveyed had provided training in other than clerical areas regarding attendance. Seventeen schools (61%) had had no training sessions and ten schools (36%) had held training sessions on clerical issues.

20) Twenty-four schools (86%) have had a staff meeting on attendance issues. Seventeen (61%) of the schools had discussed attendance at staff meetings, but only seven schools (25%) had actually designated attendance issues as an agenda item or primary focus of a staff meeting.

21) Twenty three schools (82%) have meetings of all personnel working on attendance. At five schools (18%) there are regular meetings, eighteen schools (64%) hold such meetings as needed, five schools (18%) do not hold meetings.

° In addition:

22) None of the schools in the survey had included feeder schools in developing their attendance plans. Only three junior high schools and two high schools (18% of the total) had met at all with representatives of their feeder.

23) Only sixteen of the schools (57%) were in compliance with the time schedule for sending postcards to students' homes and only nine schools (32%) were in compliance regarding 407's, the referral form for attendance teachers.

24) Of the fourteen districts which cooperated with the survey, three had only one attendance teacher, two districts had two attendance teachers, five districts had three attendance teachers, one had four attendance teachers, and three districts had five attendance teachers. The student/attendance teacher ratio ranges from one attendance teacher for 2,952 students to one teacher for 34,739 students.

25) Only one of the district attendance coordinators could supply specific data on actual caseloads for the attendance teachers, numbers of students contacted and number of students actually returning to school.

26) Estimates for caseloads in the districts began at 300 students per attendance teacher and went into the thousands.

Chancellor's Special Circular No. 2

This circular, dated August 24, 1979, discusses the implementation of the "Clearance of Register" procedure as required by the Attendance Program. According to Board of Education officials, this circular is now under review and will be re-issued in the fall of 1980. The register clearance process, "designed to locate absentees during the beginning of the school year and to provide accurate data concerning school population," was designated as a priority for Fall, 1979 by the Bureau of Attendance. The circular states that "All students who are on the school register, but have not attended a single day of school from the beginning of the term up to and including Tuesday, October 30, 1979, and whose absence remains unaccounted for, are to be discharged as of October 30, 1979." The circular does not require, but "assumes that each public school will have made substantive efforts to locate the students."

A student can be discharged legally only if he or she transfers, graduates, gets married, reaches 17 and has parental permission or if "not found." A child can only be discharged as "not found" by an Attendance Teacher and only if substantial efforts have been made to locate the student. Under Circular # 2, students could be discharged if they had not attended school for a single day. If substantial efforts are not made to locate the student, this constitutes an illegal discharge.

27) "Substantial efforts" have not been made in many cases. Due to the number of students involved, it appears that several hundred (and possibly as many as 10,000) students whose cases had not been legally closed as of October 30, 1979, were illegally discharged because of insufficient follow-up.

28) Discharge forms (209-B) at the Bureau of Attendance for Fall 1979 contain the following illegal notations as reasons for discharge:

Chancellor's Circular #2
17 + not attending
17 + Bureau of Attendance
No Show - 407

29) A review of the "period two" discharges (10/2/79 - 10/31/79) for a random sample of twelve high schools, five intermediate/junior high schools, and two elementary schools revealed irregularities. Wholesale illegal discharges were made on or immediately preceeding October 30th.

30) Every student over 17 was immediately discharged as 17 +. Although technically, these students may drop out of school legally, the discharges did not reflect exit interviews, appropriate contacts, or appropriate signatures as required. Several students born in 1963 and 1964 were also mistakenly discharged in the 17 + category.

31) It is difficult to estimate the total number of illegal discharges.

It is unclear whether all possible avenues were explored before a student was discharged as "not found" on October 30, 1979. In cases where insufficient efforts were made to locate the student before the deadline, these would also be illegal discharges. We estimate that there were 1,500 illegal discharges in the 19 sample schools alone.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chancellor's Attendance Program attempts inroads in three areas:

1) The development of accurate register and attendance data;

2) The priority status assigned to increasing attendance, articulated in an attendance plan designed by each school.

3) The notification of all school, district and central personnel of their appropriate roles and contribution in this effort.

Although the plan demonstrates some success, four problem areas still must be addressed:

1) Lack of formal evaluation of existing programs
2) Non-compliance with the Chancellor's Attendance Program
3) Clearance of registers
4) The lack of emphasis on educational programs
5) Out-of-school youth

1) Evaluation

1) The Board of Education should conduct a sophisticated analysis and evaluation of school-based attendance programs in order to identify the most successful strategies.

Such evaluations are an important pre-requisite to expansion and replication of the programs.

2) Compliance with the Chancellor's Attendance Program

It should be the obligation of the borough superintendents to monitor the design and implementation of an effective attendance plan for each high school. In the districts, where implementation of a uniform program is more difficult, the district attendance coordinators should have this monitoring responsibility.

Non-compliance with the Chancellor's Program needs to be addressed. Findings 1-5 (preparation and submission of an attendance plan), 6 (carrying out a needs assessment), 10-14 (structure of the Committee on Attendance) and 15-17 (role of the district) are examples of problem areas.

In order to obtain cooperation from the schools as well as to refine the program, EPP recommends that a conference on attendance be called for representatives and parents of all 32 districts. This could be an opportunity to share successful strategies as well as to revise and strengthen the Chancellor's Program based on this year's experience. In addition, it is hoped that consultation would increase the districts' commitment to the program.

3) Clearance of Registers

No student should be discharged until all efforts to locate the student and provide alternative services have been made and documented. All cases of illegal discharge should be re-opened and re-evaluated. It is clearly both against the law and against the best interests of the students to do otherwise.

4) Emphasis on Educational Programs

Each school must provide programs which will attract all of our students to schools. Each attendance plan should provide for teacher training that will emphasize the teacher's pivotal role in encouraging attendance.

The fourth problem area is the implicit separation of attendance-related activities and other educational programs in the schools, as seen in Findings 7-8 and 18-21.

This is not to deny the importance of improved clerical procedure. EPP has regularly advocated for improved data collection and evaluation at the Board of Education. Clearly, standardized clerical procedures are vital for a decentralized system that is responsible for close to a million school children. No solutions can be formulated until we understand the parameters of the problem. In the next chapter, we will again address the problem of an adequate, useful data base. However, we cannot stress too emphatically that record-keeping is only a prepatory first step. It is important to record attendance; however, it is much more important to provide an educational program that children will attend.

> Today's truants are young people who have judged and rejected the schools as not for them. Their challenge to the schools is to make what goes on inside more attractive than street life, closer to their experience and more useful in meeting life needs. Unless school and community programs make these children want to resume their interrupted learning, surely technical measures will fail to reduce truancy to any significant degree. (Education Committee Women's City Club, It's 10 AM: Do You Know Where Your Children Are? March, 1979, p. 1)

The separation of attendance related activities and other programming in the schools is largely a question of the principal's attitude. Emphasis on a schoolbased attendance plan can be a successful strategy. However, additional attendance-related activities should supplement an educational program that addresses the needs of students and provides an incentive to attend school and learn. The priority status of attendance should permeate every school activity. It is counter-productive to designate specific activities as "attendance-related" if the result is that all other education services are set apart from the attendance plan and stripped of their value for encouraging good attendance. It is mainly the principal's role to cultivate a comprehensive attitude towards attendance.

In the introduction to the School Attendance Manual, there is a recognition of the critical role of teachers, principals and supervisors in implementing any attendance plan. There are ample provisions and guidelines for attendance taking. Schools are encouraged to move beyond the mere mechanics of attendance taking to provision of "Special School-Based Programs." The Plan also provides for technical assistance and training to be provided by the Task Force.

However, given the plan's awareness of the key role which teachers play in the development and implementation of any plan, and the perceptions of teachers that they are over-burdened and ill-prepared to work with the truant population, it is striking that there is no provision for teacher training although training for secretaries in filing forms is specifically mentioned.

No teacher, having taken the roll, has completed his or her attendance-taking activities for the day. After tallying the number of children absent, attendance-related activities for the students who are present should include everything else that occurs in school during the day. No staff meeting on attendance is complete if the only topic is the correct clerical format for absent students and no mention is made of services for attending students. EPP staff has prepared a detailed discussion of Programming for the Truant, Appendix C. This is simply a compendium of information available in the literature and known to the school system. It is imperative that schools provide programs which will attract all of our students to school.

5) The Out-of-School Youth

The EPP suggests that service to out-of-school youth be provided through purchase of service agreements with community-based organizations throughout the City.

The out-of-school youth is the missing element in the Chancellor's Attendance Program. The Program does not address the needs of the out-of-school student, or long-term absentee. There are two sides to the problem of truancy. One is ensuring that students continue to attend school, or retention. The second issue, and one of growing dimensions in New York City, is reaching out and contacting students who are already out of school. Ideally, an effective early identification effort to reach children before they leave the system and to prevent others from feeling pushed out would obviate the need for outreach services. However, at this time, with an ever-increasing population of out-of-school children in New York City, we must address this problem. Table V presents drop-out statistics for 1978-79.

The Division of High Schools in response to the Dropout Report has begun to address the out-of-school youth. Three Outreach Centers are being established as a means of assisting students to return to instructional settings. A flexible program is being organized to provide each returning student with a variety of services including: an education and psychosocial profile; the Personal Growth Laboratory (a program which has been successfully implemented in other settings); referrals for necessary supportive and social services; an appropriate instructional placement; and follow-up and monitoring activities. The Division is also planning several new small instructional settings which will be affiliated with an existing high school.

However, the EPP suggests that such centers can never achieve the outreach capabilities of the existing network of community-based organizations.

TABLE V

High School Dropouts, School Year 1978-1979

Manhattan	Number of Dropouts	Register 10/31/78	Reports Missing*	% of Dropouts
Benjamin Franklin	458	2,128	None	22 %
Charles Evans Hughes	612	2,770	None	22
Seward Park	803	3,856	None	21
Washington Irving	436	2,397	None	18
George Washington	436	3,298	Period 9	13
Louis Brandeis	1,027	4,219	None	24
Stuyvesant	27	2,762	None	1
Julia Richman	648	3,543	None	18
Music and Art	64	2,503	Periods 2 & 4	3
Martin Luther King	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Murry Bergtraum	43	2,551	None	2
Parkwest	808	3,877	Periods 1 & 2	21
Fashion Industries	181	2,407	None	8
Chelsea	74	1,115	None	7
Norman Thomas	166	3,044	None	7
N.Y. School of Printing	229	1,923	None	12
Art and Design	73	2,269	None	3
Manhattan	280	1,713	Period 2	16
Mabel Dean Bacon	43	1,275	None	3
Park East	192	488	Periods 4 & 8	39
West Side	102	313	None	33
Lower East Side	195	557	Periods 6,9,10	35
Satellite	401	479	Periods 7 & 10	59
Harlem Prep	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Auxiliary	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Staten Island				
New Dorp	301	2,801	None	11
Port Richmond	240	2,982	None	8
Curtis	278	2,323	Period 8	12
Tottenville	278	4,927	None	6
Wagner	213	3,032	None	7
R. McGee	176	1,414	None	12

TABLE V continued

Queens	Number of Dropouts	Register 10/31/78	Reports Missing	% Of Dropouts
August Martin	81	2,035	None	4
Beach Channel	326	3,505	None	9
B. Cardozo	360	3,068	None	12
Springfield Gardens	499	3,225	None	15
John Bowne	515	3,849	None	13
Francis Lewis	318	3,003	None	11
M. Van Buren	296	3,425	None	9
Forest Hills	265	4,927	None	6
C. Bryant	595	3,844	None	15
Long Island City	452	3,297	None	14
Newtown	527	4,680	None	12
Flushing	406	2,741	None	15
Far Rockaway	341	2,265	None	15
Jamaica	287	3,155	Period 8	9
Richmond Hill	364	2,745	None	13
John Adams	882	4,807	None	18
G. Cleveland	992	4,015	Period 8	25
A. Jackson	373	2,655	None	14
Bayside	281	3,718	Period 10	8
Hillcrest	446	3,158	None	14
Queens	119	1,292	None	9
Aviation	40	2,976	None	1
Thomas Edison	141	2,429	Period 4	6
Auxiliary	N/A	N/A	None	N/A
Middle College	85	421	N/A	20
Bronx				
Morris	783	2,849	None	27
Herbert Lehman	663	3,408	None	19
W.H. Taft	1,247	3,888	None	35
C. Columbus	612	3,146	None	19
Monroe	829	2,970	None	30
Evander Childs	557	3,742	None	15
Walton	734	3,431	None	21
Roosevelt	1,368	4,486	None	30
Clinton	927	4,221	None	22
Bronx Science	52	3,320	None	2
A. Stevenson	790	4,461	None	18
H.S. Truman	319	3,361	None	9
South Bronx	30	790	Period 3	4
J. Kennedy	945	4,830	None	20
A.E. Smith	261	1,764	None	15
Jane Addams	314	1,534	None	20
S. Gompers	264	1,021	None	26
G. Dodge	79	1,968	Period 9	4
Auxiliary	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Brooklyn	Number of Dropouts	Register 10/31/78	Reports Missing	% of Dropouts
Lafayette	528	3,495	None	15
Midwood	396	2,854	None	14
A. Lincoln	371	2,935	Period 7	13
S. Tilden	286	2,952	None	10
F.K. Lane	953	5,192	None	18
J. Madison	396	3,275	None	12
Brooklyn Tech	363	5,830	None	6
T. Jefferson	1,003	3,928	None	26
Prospect Heights	639	3,176	None	20
New Utrecht	520	2,800	None	19
Boys and Girls	580	4,667	None	12
John Jay	1,237	4,496	None	28
Erasmus Hall	741	4,077	None	18
G. Wingate	439	3,459	None	13
Eastern District	821	3,028	None	27
Bushwick	718	2,952	None	24
Bay Ridge	378	2,378	None	17
Ft. Hamilton	555	3,760	None	15
Sheepshead Bay	330	3,117	None	11
Canarsie	447	2,663	None	17
F. Roosevelt	688	3,891	None	18
J. Dewey	160	3,422	None	5
South Shore	530	4,586	None	12
E.R. Murrow	138	2,849	None	5
Barton	52	2,349	None	2
Sarah J. Hale	527	2,589	None	20
G. Westinghouse	173	2,378	None	7
Automotive	171	1,726	None	10
East New York	286	1,705	None	17
W. Grady	163	2,174	None	7
A. Hamilton	262	1,259	None	21
E. Whitney	336	2,353	None	14
W. Maxwell	242	1,824	None	13
Auxiliary	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pacific	343	512	None	47
City-as-School	62	339	None	18
High School Redirection	211	571	Periods 1,7,10	37
P.M. High School	123	1,292	None	9

Period 1 - September
Period 2 - October
Period 3 - November
Period 4 - December
Period 5 - January
Period 6 - February
Period 7 - March
Period 8 - April
Period 9 - May
period 10 - June

Attendance and other school-related problems seldom appear in isolation. The majority of these youth are struggling with social and environmental problems beyond the scope of the school system. This is evident in examining the case histories of youth currently being served by other social service and support systems. School-related problems, especially truancy, characterize those adolescents who eventually come to the attention of the child welfare system (foster care and preventive services) and the juvenile justice system (probation and diversion programs).

A study by the Economic Development Council of New York City (Truancy in New York City's Public Schools, October, 1977) explored the relationship between truancy and juvenile crime. The report states that confirmation of a juvenile's tendency to break the law during school hours is found in New York City police records. EDC estimates that the cost of truancy-related crimes in New York City for 1976 was $329,000,000.

A survey of preventive service programs contracting with the New York City Department of Social Services, Special Services for Children (SSC), noted the prevalence of school-related problems.

> One of the major systems which preventive programs have to deal with regularly is education.
>
> After analyzing and reviewing all the data collected, it was noted that more than half of the preventive programs reported, either in the Data Collection Form or at the time of site visits, that school-related problems ranging from behind grade level work and unmet special needs to truancy and suspension, were the most common presenting problems and/or reasons for referrals. In addition, case records often indicated the presence of school-related problems for at least one child in the family regardless of the initial reason for referral.

(See INTERFACE, An Ounce of Prevention: A Survey of Preventive Services Programs Contracted by New York City Special Services for Children, April, 1980, p. 36.)

Three general findings support the recommendation that CBO's provide services to out-of-school youth.

a) Services for out of school youth are not widely available in our public school system.

b) The Board of Education is not the most appropriate service deliverer to reach out-of-school youth.

c) There is an existing network of community-based organizations (CBO's) throughout the City with experience providing outreach services.

A. Existing School Attendance Services For Out-of-School Children

The greatest gap in service to out-of-school youths appears at the community school district level as documented by the survey of junior high school and district attendance plans (see Findings 8-9 and 23-26). However, all experience points to the fact that attendance and drop-out problems are increasingly appearing at an earlier grade. Repeatedly, junior high school staff noted the necessity of implementing early identification and preventive programs in the elementary and middle schools. However, few, if any, such programs exist. High School principals unanimously mention the problems of articulation and the number of children who never even reach their schools. (See Chapter III). However, the relative concentration of attendance services (though still insufficient) in the high schools and the current attention on the drop-out problem leave these younger students unaddressed until their problems are severe enough to demand a response from the school system. Predictably, by that time, the problems are also much harder to solve.

The EPP previously has made the following recommendations regarding the allocation of funds to fhe high schools for students with attendance problems (See p. 13-15 for the fiscal disincentives for improving attendance in the current allocation formula):

1. The allocation formula, whatever its form, should be considered child-specific funds. While different services may be provided to different students, a student must receive services in return for the funding that he/she attracts to the schools. Under no circumstances should one student's program depend on the absence of another. The evaluation and monitoring of such targeting of funds would be a part of the task performed by the borough superintendents in supervising all principals.
2. A certain number of Executive Director's discretionary units should be reserved for attendance purposes. A number of these would be assigned, on a per capita basis, to the schools for their LTA's. The amount would be less than that for students on an allocation register, so that there would be an incentive to succeed in bringing long-term truants back to the schools, at which time, the schools would be awarded a higher allocation. (Educational Priorities Panel, Allocation of Tax Levy Funds to New York City High Schools, May, 1979, pp.100-101).

Although the High School Division has instituted an small allotment as recommended above, the number of units was not sufficient to actually improve the situation (although it does represent an important commitment). The EPP continues to endorse both of these recommendations to provide resources and appropriate services to all public school children, including those with attendance problems.

The Division of High Schools also has taken important initiatives in response to the public release of the "Drop-Out Report" in the establishment of the retrieval centers. The Board of Education deserves praise for acknowledging the dimensions of the drop-out problem and for moving to provide services. However, the Board's strategies do not maximize available resources in support of this population as further discussed.

B. The Role of the Board of Education

We should not ask, however, that the Board fill a role that is inappropriate for it. The primary mission of the public school system is to provide effective educational programming and instruction to students. The Educational Priorities Panel expects the New York City public schools to provide an appropriate education for each and every child. However, we recognize that this is an enormous task. We cannot, nor should we, expect the school system to address other needs. Social services are the responsibility, and the expertise, of other delivery systems. These other service deliverers should fulfill their mission. Experience and skills should not be wasted nor should we be shifting responsibility for solving every problem to an already overburdened school system.

The EPP supports the idea of coordinated services and the preparation of an integrated service plan for each child. However, this should not be misinterpreted to mean that all services must be provided by one professional or one system. Rather, it means that each piece of the comprehensive service plan should be delivered by the best-qualified individual or structure in cooperation with the other service providers. While the schools may be best equipped to provide services to children in school, it may not be able to reach out to children who are not attending school.

> "Children in our schools are increasingly exhibiting a range of learning and behavioral problems that seem to be in part a function of emotional difficulties that begin outside the school. When a particular set of problems such as school maladjustment or truancy becomes so widespread, it becomes cost-inefficient to continue to provide services on a case-by-case basis without some atttention to the larger, common structural elements in a particular cluster of families or communities that may be contributing to the problem. Since schools are the primary alternate site in which young children function, treatment and early intervention efforts must include an effort to reconcile home and and school. This strategy must involve collaboration among disciplines - mental health workers recognizing the importance of school in a child's life and school administrators acknowledging

that school boundaries are not impermeable." (Interface, A Survey of Early Intervention Programs in New York State, 1978, p.48.)

The Board of Education must be careful to avoid two pitfalls in addressing the needs of out-of-school youth. The first relates to flexibility and the second to professionalism. The public schools must not only be willing to entertain new and creative approaches but should be vigorously pursuing innovative answers to the problems of the school population. The routine approach of having an attendance teacher telephone or visit the home is a limited response to truancy. The avenues available to an attendance teacher for locating a truant, as outlined in the School Attendance Manual are only a first step. Providing referrals to other social service bureaucracies is inadequate if there is no case advocacy, no assistance in negotiating with these formidable, and often unyielding, systems, no follow-up or monitoring, and, finally, no coordination or planning for a comprehensive package of services. Attendance teachers repeatedly asserted that huge caseloads restrict their activities to clerical duties, locating students and providing limited referrals. Limited time and previous failures restrain attendance teachers from taking many cases to Family Court or taking advantage of their legal standing or possible legal functions. The Board of Education must take advantage of all existing methods of providing attendance programming, both public and private.

The second problem noted above is a restrictive emphasis on professionalism. A significant factor in the positive use of alternatives and flexibility is the use of diversified staff. In order to serve students, the Board of Education has to recognize the many and varied skills offered by different personnel. One need not be an "attendance" teacher to cultivate good attendance in students. Further, one need not be a pedagogue to address school-related problems. Just as the Board of Education has utilized aides and paraprofessionals for specific duties, outreach to out-of-school youth should be provided by a variety of staff persons. Different skills, experiences, and working conditions are required to provide various services to meet different needs. The most effective program will take advantage of the available personnel. Students are not well-served by arbitrary or traditional professional designations. Flexible programming requires the capacity to revise job descriptions and staffing patterns to match the most qualified person with the required task.

C. Advantages of Community-Based Organizations

Currently, many CBO's are providing services to the out-of school population with public funding from a variety of city agencies -- Special Services for Children, the New York City Youth Board, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. As discussed previously, whether their specific mandate is to prevent foster care placement or to divert youth from the juvenile justice system, a primary focus for treatment/services is the school-related problem and truancy prevention.

There are three major reasons for the Board of Education to use its funds to strengthen and expand the outreach and truancy prevention components of these programs: the experience of the CBO's, their acceptance in the neighborhood, and the flexibility of their staff and programming.

(i) CBO's have experience - The Board of Education should not be expending valuable time and resources to "reinvent the wheel." It is counter-productive for Board personnel to recreate program models, curriculae, and service strategies that have already been designed, implemented, and field-tested by CBO's. Not only is it a waste of the Board of Education's resources to provide services already provided elsewhere but it is a drain on the CBO's, who are called in for consultation and advice. It is more useful for CBO's to provide services directly to students rather than give technical assistance to the Board of Education.

(ii) CBO's have community acceptance - The effective community-based organizations have developed as an integral part of a neighborhood. The trust, the intricate linkages, and the intimate understanding of a community's strengths and weaknesses that is developed over time cannot be replicated easily by Board of Education personnel moving into a neighborhood. The extensive bumping and excessing of staff produced by budget cuts has not allowed many school personnel to remain in one area long enough to become part of the community. Fiscal pressures have also meant that one attendance teacher is responsible for an entire school district or for a high school attendance area that includes not one, but two, three, or a half dozen distinct and complex communities. It is beyond any individual's capacity to develop the necessary familiarity with so many disparate areas.

Further reducing the chances of success, attendance teachers are regularly rotated out of their schools or responsibilities to address emergency situations or short-term priorities (see Chapter III). Considering all of these barriers to effective linkages with the community, the Board cannot ignore those programs which have already established themselves as integral parts of communities. The Board should be capitalizing on their contacts, information, and resources. Obviously, there is a range in the quality of services provided by CBO's. However, those that have been successful have received an acceptance from the community. This is an invaluable resource for reaching out-of-school youth that the Board should recognize.

(iii) CBO's have the flexibility - Existing CBO's, with their knowledge of particular communities, have created program models along a broad spectrum, addressing the unique status of each community and the special needs and resources of the youth in the neighborhood. Moreover, a CBO will have a diversified staff, coordinating the skills of social work professionals, paraprofessionals, street workers, and volunteers -- staff indigenous to the community and those who bring important skills from outside of the community. The CBO is also unrestrained by the 9 to 3 or even 9 to 5 timetable. They can hold evening programs, visit the home before school, share in the community's night life and weekend recreation. In other words, they can provide a constant presence that encourages community members to trust staff and to consider the program a vital part of the community. In general, staff is available whenever services are required. In addition, parents, students, and community members can be incorporated into the program. Their contributions can be invaluable. Significantly, this is an area in which the school-based plans have been particularly negligent. (See Findings 11 and 14 above).

These then are the advantages offered by the community-based organizations in providing quality services to out-of-school youth. The Educational Priorities Panel suggests that an increased level of service would result if attendance services were provided through purchase-of-service agreements with CBO's throughout the City.

Therefore, we recommend:

The Board of Education should take full advantage of the existing network of community-based organizations (CBO's) throughout the city with experience providing outreach services.

IMPLEMENTATION

The EPP recommends that this policy be phased in gradually, beginning with pilot projects in a few districts. New programs should be concentrated first at the district level because decentralized attendance services have been most seriously depleted by budget cuts. Furthermore, CBO outreach programs could be housed in unused school space. This arrangement would facilitate coordination of services as well as provide an alternative use for underutilized school buildings.

Since CBO's are not of uniform quality, and, in fact, in some districts there are no CBO's capable of providing quality service, a pilot project is recommended in those districts that can identify reliable CBO's.

The eventual goal is a hetergeneous system that will provide high quality service through a variety of methodologies. Districts will be able to choose between the contractual services of a CBO and the provision of services by attendance teachers, depending on the needs of the student population, the community's distinct characteristics, the quality of the CBO's programs, and the specific personnel available.

In addition, certain districts or schools may be able to establish cooperative relations with CBO's to coordinate attendance efforts and maximize the impact of their services. Such cooperative efforts would not require the allocation of education dollars, but could utilize existing CBO funding sources. In fact, some superintendents already have contacts with CBO's in their districts to foster cooperative efforts in serving neighborhood children.

Services for the high schools and special education should be incorporated within this community-based structure as well. Services to out-of-school high school students need to be provided in the communities in which they live, not in the schools they are not attending. For special education students, the new school-based support teams can be an excellent link between the school and community services.

The EPP recommends that these attendance outreach services be contracted with CBO's by the city's Youth Board. The funding advantages of this arrangement will be discussed below.

Of course there are risks associated with contracting services, but precautions can be taken to avoid these pitfalls. New York City has had experience with other systems of purchased services which proivde important lessons for this proposal. Perhaps the most important lessons is that government must accept the considerable monitoring and accountability responsibilities that accompany purchase of services agreements.

The contracts with CBO's should be awarded according to clear guidelines previously established. For example, selection criteria should include among others:

- the organization's established network in the community;
- its experience working with truants and their families;
- successful contacts with school personnel;
- understanding of the Board of Education's structure and regulations;
- qualifications and availability of staff;

- its track record in reporting and accounting to other contractors;
- the results of former evaluations conducted by other contractors, etc.

Service requirements must be incorporated into the contracts themselves. These, of course, may vary somewhat according to the negotiations between the district and the CBO, but certain minimal requirements should be standard. The following are listed as suggestions:

- The Youth Board must conduct both fiscal and program audits (funds must not only be accounted for but well spent).
- The contracts should reflect program goals, including number of children and families to be served, specific services to be provided, and estimated numbers of children returned and/or remaining in school.
- Regular reports should be required that contain specific information including: the number of type of contacts made with children, their families, teachers, and other school personnel; contacts and referrals with other agencies; type of services provided; short and long term goals and strategies for each case; documentation of coordination with school programs, etc.

These reports and Youth Board audits will provide the Board of Education with a means of evaluating the pilot project and of refining the process for its future replication.

There are many examples of individual schools or districts currently providing attendance services in cooperation with a CBO.

Of the 47 programs contracting with Special Services for Children to divert children from foster care placement: five participate in alternative schools run by the Board of Education; seven provide tutoring and educational support services; two provide social services with personnel located in the schools; and five additional programs have established various cooperative relationships with local schools.

For example, the Community Mediation Training Program is sponsored and housed in an underutilized school by District 10 in the Bronx. One of the primary goals of the program is the "keep children in their schools." The program provides a variety of family and community services to approximately 400 families. Staff, including paraprofessionals and volunteers, have developed a service model for this particular community which focuses on "mediation." In conjunction with these services, Community School District 10 contributes five full-time teachers to provide appropriate educational services to designated children in the program.

Another example is the proposed Joint Sponsored Education Program in Park Slope, sponsored by the Interagency Truancy/Dropout Project in the Office of the Mayor. This program is described in Appendix E.

COSTS

Finally, in addition to improving services, EPP suggestions that dollar savings, so important in light of impending budget cuts, can be made. If contracts are administered by the New York City Youth Board, they will qualify as part of the City's Comprehensive Youth Plan. With this status, 50% matching funds will be available from the State Department for Youth. City tax levy dollars can be withdrawn and replaced by State funds. The result is a net savings for the City and a stable budget for attendance services with will yield increased services due to the benefits of expertise, community linkages and diversified staff available through the CBO's. This plan is similar to that being implemented (following

EPP's suggestions in the Fall of 1979) to contract extended use of schools programs through the Youth Board in order to qualify for state matching funds.

The budget of the Bureau of Attendance is currently budgeted for $3.515 million with the districts expending another $2.399 for attendance teachers.

For the initial pilot project, EPP recommends a savings of $.5 million. To achieve this, a total of $1.0 million should be deducted from the Bureau of Attendance budget and from the budgets for attendance teachers in those districts that choose to contract out services.

Of the $1 million thus removed from the Board of Education budget, $.5 million should be transferred to the Youth Board as contracting agent to the CBO's. The other $.5 million represents net savings. However, because the Youth Board funds would be matched with State Comprehensive Youth Plan funds, services would remain at the $1 million level. And, as mentioned previously, we believe that the $1 million would buy more services through CBO's than they provided through the Bureau of Attendance because of the greater flexibility of CBO staffing patterns.

The Bureau of Attendance budget will continue to support high school attendance services. For the future, if this pilot is successful, it can be expanded.

CHAPTER III

USE OF RESOURCES BY THE BUREAU OF ATTENDANCE

The Bureau of Attendance (BOA), one of five bureaus under the Office of Pupil Personnel services, is organized into two responsibility areas. The first, under the supervision of the Assistant Director, is responsible for pupil accounting and employment certification for both the centralized High School Division and the decentralized school districts. The second, under the supervision of the Chief Attendance Officer, is responsible for direct attendance teacher services to the high schools, the Special Services Unit, the Chancellor's Task Force, Special Education, and for liaison services to the 32 school districts.

In light of the increasing attendance problem, questions about the organization of the Bureau of Attendance, its use of personnel and the efficency of the programs recently have been raised.

This chapter addresses the coordination by the Bureau of Attendance with the High School Division, the use of Board of Education personnel on the Chancellor's Task Force and in the Special Services Unit, the Board of Education data base and the effect of the teacher contract on attendance services.

COORDINATION WITH THE DIVISION OF HIGH SCHOOLS

There must be cooperation and coordination between the Bureau of Attendance and the High School Division on both the policy making level and especially in the five high school districts (boroughs).

It has become quite clear that coordination between the Bureau of Attendance and the High School Division, both centralized entities within the Board of Education, is limited. For example, the priority of the

Bureau of Attendance and of the Chancellor for this year has been to clear the register while the priority of the High School Division has been to locate and retain LTA's. Both divisions determined these priorities with insufficient discussion between the two. In addition the BOA claims that, as of October 31, 1979, there were very few LTA's while the High School Division believes that there are over 8,000 LTA's in the spring semester, 1980. Similarly, according to Board of Education personnel, the High School Division planned the new drop-out retrieval centers with insufficient input from the BOA and neither the BOA nor the Chancellor requested significant input from the High School Division on either the development of the new attendance manual or the implementation of the Chancellor's attendance plan. Although the BOA borough attendance supervisors work directly with the high schools, only 42% of all high schools submitted an attendance plan to the Bureau of Attendance compared to 61.3% of all junior high and elementary schools (where attendance services are decentralized) submitted plans.

The limited coordination between the BOA and the High School Division is further accentuated at the borough level according to BOE personnel. Although there is both a district high school superintendent and a district attendance supervisor, little interaction takes place on decisions of common interest. A striking example of this is the assignment of the attendance teachers to the high schools. The district attendance supervisors request little or no input on these assignments from the high school district superintendents. Furthermore, once an attendance teacher is assigned to a high school, he or she can be pulled from that school to either work at another school or to work on a special project. The school and special project assignments are again both made with little or no input from the district superintendent or from the school itself. The result is that the high schools do not enjoy continuity of service or the same standard of service and are unable to plan for support personnel because they do not know how many attendance teachers they will have at any given time. For example, during the first few weeks of September, approximately sixty attendance teachers were pulled from their regular assignments to work on school placements. The remainder of September and all of October was devoted to clearing the register; several attendance teachers were re-assigned to those schools with large numbers of students to be discharged. In November and December, 30 attendance teachers were pulled to work on the city-wide audit, and when the second term begins in January, attendance teachers must assist in establishing the audited, adjusted registers. Between illness and special assignments, only 70% of the attendance teachers are working in the schools with students on any given day.

In order to improve coordination, both the BOA and the High School Division should seek input from and inform one another of related actions. The high school district superintendents and the district attendance supervisors should work together to avoid program duplication, or working at cross purposes with one another, and to maximize resources for attendance problems. For example, the definition of a school with needs may be a different one to the BOA and to the High School Division. The assignments of attendance teachers to the high schools should be made by the BOA with maximum input from the High School Division. The schedule of the attendance teachers and their varying re-assignments should also be made with maximum input in those instances where alternatives to pulling attendance teachers from direct services in the high schools cannot be entertained. However, in some cases, there are alternatives:

-- The EPP has previously recommended that the placement process be streamlined and that articulation between the feeder schools and the high schools be improved. It should not be necessary for sixty attendance teachers to interrupt service delivery to assist in school placements in the fall. (See Educational Priorities Panel, *Allocation of Tax Levy Resources to the High Schools*, May, 1979, pp. 52-55.)

-- The new Metrolab system should provide the type of data that will enable the attendance teachers to spend less time on the City-wide audit and the clearance of register and more time providing direct services in the high schools.

THE CHANCELLOR'S TASK FORCE ON ATTENDANCE

The duties performed by the Chancellor's Task Force should be performed by school-based personnel or by the district or borough office.

The Chancellor's Task Force is composed of seven excessed Assistant Principals (AP) and four supervisors from the Bureau of Attendance. The AP's are responsible for assisting both the schools and districts to develop their attendance plans and for evaluating the plans to insure compliance with the Chancellor's guidelines. The supervisors are responsible for monitoring uniform accounting and reporting procedures.

Through the course of our interviews in the schools with the district attendance co-ordinators and with members of the Chancellor's Task Force, it has become clear that the effectiveness of and the need for the Task Force must be questioned.

The AP's, after only one week of training by the BOA, began to work with the district offices and with the individual schools to develop and review attendance plans. The AP's serve in an advisory capacity; they have no power to change the plan of a school or insist upon compliance with the Chancellor's guidelines. Although mandated by the Chancellor's plan, only 61.3% of all the district schools submitted a plan to the Bureau of Attendance. In addition, in reviewing a 10% sample of those plans submitted, only 17% of the plans met the basic requirements as outlined in the attendance manual. It is true that in some instances, members of the Task Force have been helpful to an individual school; however, for the most part, the Task Force was seen by the schools as an intrusion.

The same holds true for the four attendance supervisors. These professionals, with salaries ranging between $27,000 and $29,000, check attendance clerical procedures in the schools. Although it is necessary that uniform standards be maintained, this type of clerical monitoring does not require the skills of an attendance supervisor. In addition, we found that in almost every school, either the attendance coordinator or an AP reviews the roll books, the admit/discharge steps, the 407's, etc. on a periodic basis. The Attendance Manual states that the principal or designee is required to check the 40 week attendance card twice-monthly; the Manual also states that the duties of the attendance co-ordinator include monitoring the use of Form 407's and the attendance cards. Therefore it seems that the responsibility of the attendance supervisors are largely duplicative of functions already being performed by other school personnel.

The attendance supervisors also serve in an advisory capacity. They can only make suggestions for improving procedure and cannot enforce uniform accounting and reporting. In addition, they were given no role in monitoring the clearance of register procedure even though that procedure was a top priority of the Office of Pupil Personnel services, and evidently needed supervision to prevent illegal discharges.

It is imperative that the schools be monitored for compliance; therefore, EPP recommends that:

-- Instead of Task Force members, the principal, an AP, or the attendance co-ordinator should be trained to monitor clerical duties; the monitoring of the attendance plans can be performed by the district or borough office.

Redeploying the members of the Task Force to provide services to children would increase available resources by $306,625 (according to August, 1979 payrolls).

THE SPECIAL SERVICES UNIT (SSU)

The S.S.U. should be run without Bureau of Attendance personnel. The clerical aspect of the program should be simplified to avoid duplication.

The Bureau of Attendance assigns seven attendance teachers to four Special Service Units (SSU) located at Times Square, Coney Island, East New York and the South Bronx. The attendance teachers work with John Jay College of Criminal Justice interns and with the transit police to handle the truant population on the subways. Students apprehended by the TA police at the subway stations are brought to the attendance teachers and John Jay students. At extensive visits to two SSU locations, it was observed that while both the attendance teachers and the interns have the skills to work effectively with this population, this talent becomes diffused among too many students; each student receives only three to five minutes of personal attention. The number of students and the lack of time allotted to each is exacerbated by the amount of paperwork required for each child.

The attendance teachers must submit three papers. The first, a re-admit slip, is sent with the child to the school; the slip is either to be returned to the Bureau of Attendance by the school or the school should call the BOA. Although the Chief Attendance Officer at the BOA claims that 80% of the students return to school and one attendance teacher at an SSU site claims only a 2% recidivism rate, other SSU staff report much higher rates. No formal attempt is being made to account for the number of students who do return to school and to monitor their attendance pattern. Therefore, the purpose of this particular clerical procedure is unclear.

The second slip of paper, the form 115, is sent to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Unit (JCPU). The 115's are kept on file for one year, are not used for referrals or cross-checks, and are then thrown out. Because the transit police have no legal right under Education Law to apprehend students in this way, the 115 serves as a documentation of the action taken by the transit police to protect their rights.*

The third slip of paper, an absentee referral form (407), is mailed to the district office. Of 12 districts responding to our questionnaire, two had never heard of the program, five received very few referrals, four received between two and seven a week. Only one -- a district in Queens -- received more than 10 per week. And although the School Attendance Manual states that top priority should be given to these referrals by the districts, there has been no documented follow-up by the districts.

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* Under section 3213 subd. 2 of the Education Law, city police do not have the authority to arrest truant minors. However, according to Sidney C. Cooper, Project Director of the Juvenile Offender Division, Transit Authority personnel, under the Public Agency Law, can bring in these youngsters "for the safety of the passengers."

The SSU clerical procedures are largely useless and wasteful of valuable resources. It is not cost-effective for a skilled professional to spend a large portion of his/her work day sending forms that are not received nor utilized for follow up.

However, despite some obvious problems, the SSU is a worthwhile program and we recommend that the Special Services Unit be run without Bureau of Attendance personnel. These attendance teachers can be better utilized in the schools. The same level of service can be maintained at no cost by expanding the John Jay program to include more college students, by including students (to be supervised by the transit police) from other programs throughout the City in human services, sociology, psychology, and by including work study students. By expanding the program to include many disciplines, the students can provide counseling, placement and referrals for the truants rather than merely sending them back to school. They would also be peers as well as role models. Similarly, the program can be expanded beyond apprehension to include a full day of counseling, referral and placement.

Furthermore, the EPP recommends that the clerical aspect of the program be examined closely to avoid duplication of effort. Form 115, now sent only to the JCPU, was designed to include all the information needed by the school, the BOA, the attendance teacher in the school district, and the JCPU. This one form can be filled out in triplicate by the intern at the SSU and sent to the appropriate people thus saving time and avoiding duplication.

If these recommendations are implemented, services will be increased at the SSU and direct services to children will be increased by $159,362 (according to August, 1979 payrolls).

THE DATA BASE

An accurate and current data base should be kept by the Bureau of Attendance. A data base should be kept at individual schools. The data should be used to identify current and potential truants and to design and evaluate school-based attendance programs.

During the course of this study, it was necessary for researchers to obtain data from various sources including the Bureau of Attendance, the attendance personnel in the high school districts and the community school districts. This data base does not exist. Furthermore, the lack of a data base does not appear to be of particular concern to most individuals at the Board of Education. Although clearing the register is the top priority of the Office of Pupil Personnel Services, no official attempt has been made by that office to aggregate the number of students cleared, according to the reason for discharge. Despite the insistence by that office that the number of LTA's is grossly inflated because of double counting, no attempt has been made to document this by analyzing the data.

Our efforts to collect and aggregate this data was resisted at all levels. Neither the high school districts nor the Chief Attendance Office was able to detail the number of discharges and the reason discharged. Each insisted that the other had the data. Despite a month of efforts, no data were obtained. The number of no-shows was equally difficult to get and although the Bureau of Attendance has these figures, they

(11/79 to 2/80), figures from September '79 were "gone." Furthermore, only keep the most recent weeks on file. By the time of the study, data on discharges and admissions for the 1975-76, 76-77,77-78 and 78-79 school years, although complete, are totally inaccurate. Keypunch errors have rendered this information useless.

Why is a current and accurate data base important? First, it will reveal the characteristics of students who are truant. Without such data it is impossible to design an attendance program aimed at the population most at risk. Second, it will enable the Board of evaluate the success of various attendance programs so that the most successful can be replicated. Without such data, the development of attendance programs will be merely by trial and error.

A new central computerized accounting system, Metrolab, will keep track of admits and discharges, thus relieving the schools of certain clerical duties, but it will not provide the kind of information on the attendance of individual students that is necessary for designing and evaluating attendance programs.

Therefore, the EPP recommends that the data base should be kept by the Bureau of Attendance and be accurate and current and should include:

- average daily attendance in the high schools, districts and individual schools
- total number of discharges, aggregated by reason for discharge and by individual school
- attendance figures by sex, grade, age, special program, reading level
- attendance figures by day of week, time of year, holidays, etc.
- school demographic data - ethnicity, # free lunch eligible, ADC eligible, % special education

In addition, we recommend that the data base kept at the individual school be constructed in a way that will aid in predicting the individual students likely to drop out. This includes:

- parental involvement/lack of involvement
    - extra-curricular involvement
    - number of disciplinary referrals
    - reading level
    - race, age, sex, grade
    - days of the week most frequently absent
    - onset of cutting behavior
    - stated attitudes towards education at the junior high school level

-- the data base should be used for identifying both current truants and potential truants. Better programs and preventive measures should be designed according to the population in need and their attendance patterns.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

Classroom teachers should be required to send postcards to parents and 407's to attendance teachers. Teachers assigned to work on attendance during their administrative period should work with students rather than clerical issues.

According to their negotiated contract, teachers are no longer required to send either postcards to the parents of students absent in their homeroom or absentee referrals (407's) to attendance teachers. These functions have been transferred to a clerical staff within the school. Theoretically, this allows the teacher more time for preparation and for working closely with individual students. Although this may be true, the children have lost something as well. The homeroom and its teacher have been described by many educators as the "front line" of defense against a student with attendance problems. At the present time, a student who has been absent no longer has one person monitoring his attendance but several. Attendance is no longer personalized; rather an anonymous attendance aide has taken over this important function. In addition, although the 407 referrals have space for teacher comments on the individual student, at the present time, this information is not included.

In addition to the cost to children personally, this contract clause also has monetary costs. Schools were forced to hire aides. It is ironic that schools have to have a school aide to fulfill their attendance related responsibilities but do not have to have effective programming that will keep youngsters in school.

Because we feel that the personalization of the attendance function is vital, we recommend that, as part of the next contract settlement:

- -- teachers be required once again to send postcards to parents and 407's to attendance teachers
- -- teachers assigned to work on attendance during their administrative period should work with students problems or potential truants rather than concentrate on school wide clerical issues. Clerical work should be done by aides or clerical workers.

Based on an average of one school aide for every junior high school and high school, a conservative estimate of the cost of filling out postcards and 407's is $1,250,000 in school aide time. This time could be reallocated to other support services.

CONCLUSION

The Educational Priorities Panel believes that education dollars should be spent as effectively and efficiently as possible. Absenteeism, truancy and dropping out of our public schools are reaching crisis proportion, and the trends must be reversed. The recommendations of this report are important first steps in addressing these issues, even within the severe fiscal constraints imposed upon our school system today. If implemented they would result in the unique accomplishment of providing improved educational services at lower cost.

APPENDIX A -- Methodology

A. Schools and Agencies Included in the Study

Seventeen Junior High Schools and eleven High Schools were randomly selected as the basis for the study. This represents 10% of the middle and senior public schools in the New York City system. Individuals from several divisions of the Board of Education were also included in the study, as well as representatives of Private Agencies and the Office of the Mayor.

B. Instruments

The data for the study was gathered mainly through interviews. A set of two interview guides was designed for use in the schools. One at the Principal/Attendance Coordinator level; the other for Attendance Aides. A third interview guide was designed for use in telephone interviews with the District Attendance Coordinators. Open ended interviews were conducted with Board of Education representatives, District Attendance Teachers and Supervisors and the representatives of Private Agencies. Copies of the interview guides follow.

C. Interviews

At each school, interviews were conducted with the Attendance Coordinator and/or Principal and the Attendance Aides. In all, there were 93 interviews conducted in the schools; an average of 4 hours was spent at each school. The interview guides were designed to gather information on:

- the perceptions of school personnel of the Chancellor's Task Force
- the development and implementation of Attendance Plans
- the scope of the attendance problem

-- communication beteween District and schools

-- the level of utilization of non-school (social service) programs by schools

-- the utilization of Metrolab

-- the existence of attendance services in the schools.

Phone interviews were conducted with 15 District Attendance Coordinators. These interviews were designed to gather information concerning:

-- district attendance plans

-- communication between District and schools

-- communication between District and central divisions

— activities of District attendance teachers.

There were less formal open-ended interviews conducted with several officials of the Board of Education. These included the Chief Attendance Officer, the Acting Director of the Bureau of Attendance, the Assistant Director and the Deputy Director. From the High School Division, the Executive Director and three Assistants were interviewed. In addition, one Transit Policeman, one representative of the Juvenile Crime Prevention Unit and the Supervisor of Interns at John Jay College were interviewed. All represent different aspects of the Specal Services Unit. Interviewers also spent 10 hours at 2 special services units observing the program. In addition, 5 high school Attendance Supervisors, 2 members of the Chancellor's Task Force and the Director of Education from the Office of the Mayor were also interviewd.

Finally, several representatives of community private agencies who are involved in New York City attendance issues were also interviewed.

The focus of these interviews was in the following areas:

- -- the currently perceived status of the Chancellor's plan
- -- the strengths and weaknesses of the Central Board, district offices, school staff and committees on attendance
- -- level of success in achieving stated goals
- -- recommendations for improving the attendance program
- -- additional data needed to identify the target population for specific attendance programs
- -- expected utility of Metrolab

D. Information Gathering

Several hours were spent at the Office of Educational Statistics collecting data on the average daily attendance in the high schools and junior high schools of the schools in our sample. A 10% sample of attendance plans which were submitted by the schools to the Board were also read.

The Metrolab proposal was reviewed in order to identify goals, the specific data that would be aggregated and analyzed and the specific information that would be available.

A quantitative and qualitative analysis was done for each school in those areas where sufficient information was available from a significant number of schools. A similar process was undertaken with the interviews of the District Attendance Coordinators. Data gathered from interviews with Board of Education officials, the review of the Chancellor's Plans as well as information from the Office of Educational Statistics, were used as the backdrop/context in which to assess information, gathered from the schools and Special Service Units.

E. Literature Review

An ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) search was conducted at the Columbia Teachers College ERIC Center, in order to identify and collect relevant material on Reasons for Truancy and Programs for Truants. Many unpublished studies and general information and reports related to Board of Eduation Attendance Programs were also reviewed. A bibliography is included as Appendix F.

INTERVIEW GUIDE - ATTENDANCE PERSONNEL

1) What are your responsibilities? Program details -- # kids, problems, hours, goals, evaluation, referrals, data, etc.

2) How much of your time is spent on attendance-related activities?

3) Are you a member of the Committee on Attendance?

4) Did you participate in the development of the school's attendance plan? Participate in evaluation of the plan? Monitoring?

5) Who is your supervisor?

6) Do you have any contact with staff at the Bureau of Attendance?

7) Does your work coordinate with any other attendance programs?

8) Did you receive any training from school personnel? District? BOE?

9) Comments?

INTERVIEW GUIDE - PRINCIPAL OR ATTENDANCE COORDINATOR

1) Please describe the attendance situation at your school. (Include average daily attendance; problem areas - specific grades, tracts or levels; long-term absentee, intermittent absenteeism, and cutter problems; any causal factors which have been identified.)

2) What are your attendance-related responsibilities? What specific activities are involved? How much of your time is devoted to the activities?

3) Who else at the school has attendance-related responsibilities? (Titles)?

Are there meetings of all personnel working on attendance issues?
Y____ N____

How often?

Who attends?

Has there ever been a staff meeting devoted to the school's attendance program?
Y____ N____

When?

Have there ever been training sessions related to attendance issues?
Y____ N____

When?

Who participated?

4) What is your relationship with the Bureau of Attendance?

Do they provide any services to the school?
Y____ N____

What are the services?
Has anyone from BOE or the Chancellor's Task Force visited the school this year?
Y____ N____ Who? When? For what purpose?

Have you received any memoranda or instructions from BOA?
Y____ N____

Has BOE provided any staff training?
Y____ N____ Who? When?

Has anyone from Metrolab visited the school?
Y____ N____ Who? When? For what purpose?
Has there been any training on how to complete the forms for Metrolab?
Y____ N____ When? Who was the sponsor? Who participated?

5) Does your school have an attendance plan? (Get copy of this year's and previous plans).

6) When was this plan completed?

How long did it take to complete the plan?

7) Who contributed to the development of the attendance plan? (Titles)?

Were students involved? Y____ N____
Were parents involved? Y____ N____
Were representatives from feeder schools involved? Y____ N____

Was anyone from the district office (or Borough Superintendent's Office) involved? Y____ N____ If yes, please name.

Was anyone from the Bureau of Attendance involved? Y____ N____
If yes, please name.

8) Did anyone review your attendance plan?
Y____ N____ When? Who?

9) Did the school conduct a needs assessment?
Y____ N____ When? Who? What statistical data was available for developing the attendance plan?

10) Was data provided by the Central Board? Y____ N____
What office? BOE____ Metrolab____ Educational Statitstics____ Other____
What was provided?

Was data provided by the district (or borough) superintendent?
Y____ N____
What?

What data is generated here at the school?
How often? By whom?

What data was provided by feeder schools to develop this plan?
Which feeders?

11) Have you identified the primary reason for absenteeism in this school?
Y____ N____

What are they?
How were they identified?
How did you determine appropriate short and long range objectives?
How did you design the appropriate program or strategy?

12) Do you have a program for long-term absentees?
Y____ N____
Intermittent absentees? Y____ N____
Cutters? Y____ N____

Early identifciaton of students with attendance problems?
Y____ N____

Which is the priority?

13) How do you define the following terms?
LTA__________________No-show__________________Truant__________________

14) Do you have any official class for LTA's (no-show's)?

15) Does your school keep information on kids who attend sporadically?

i.e. breakdown of no. of days absent:
1-10 days
10-20 days, etc.

What programs do you have for those who attend sporadically?
Separate official class?
How many classes per day in the program?
How many students on register of each class?
Are the classes credit bearing?
Do they have homework? Books?
How long might a student be enrolled in this program?
How does a student get into the program?
Get out of the program?
Is there a policy to relate attendance with academic grades? Y___N___
Explain.

For each component of attendance program:

15) Activity__________________

Who is responsible? Staff title_____________
How is this being monitored?_________________

Is there an evaluation component?
Y____ N____

What is the measurable objective?
How many children are involved?

Is there a target population? Y____ N____

Has this been done before? Y____ N____
How is this funded? Tax levy__________
Reimbursable? (Specify)
What has been the impact thus far?

How is this coordinated with other activities?

16) How do you identify students with attendance problems?

17) Is there a Committee on Attendance in this school? Y____ N____

Who are the members?

Who is the Chairperson?

Are there specific groups which are represented on the COA?

What are the responsibilities of the COA?

Did the COA approve the school's attendance plan? Y____ N____

How often does the COA meet?

When was the last meeting?

Are there minutes of COA meetings?
(Ask to see the minutes)

Does the COA meet with all other school personnel who are involved in attendance activities?
Y____ N____

How often?
Is the school represented on the District COA?
Y____ N____

Does the COA ever meet with representatives of the COA's from other schools?
Y____ N____

18) Who is the district attendance coordinator?

Did he/she review your plan?
Y____ N____

Did you receive any guidance from the district regarding the development of the attendance plan or specific programs?
Y____ N____

Has the superintendent or district coordinator sent any memoranda regarding attendance?
Y____ N____

Held any district meetings? Y____ N____
When?

Held in-service training? Y____ N____
When?

Have you had an opportunity to review the district's attendance plan?
Y____ N____

Which was completed first, the district or school plan?
District________________School_________________

Was there any coordination between the plans?
Y____ N____

19) Have you reviewed the school attendance plans of your feeders schools?
Y____ N____

Have you met with any representatives from the feeder schools on this subject?
Y____ N____

20) Are there any non-school programs in the community for children with attendance problems?

Public_______________Private_____________________

Did you meet with staff of these programs?
Y____ N____ How often?

Do you refer children to these program?
Y____ N____ How many?

21) What is the procedure for locating a no-show student?

Call to family
Meeting with other school personnel
Home visit
Meet with neighborhood children
Complete Form 407
When?
Log of contacts and activities
Clear register

When?

Who is responsible for working with these students?
Are there programs for returnees?

How many no-shows were there on the register in September?

How many no-shows are on the October 31st, 1979 register?

How many no-show students have returned to school?

How many no-show students have been cleared from the register?

High Schools

22) Did you recieve an allocation for LTA's this year?
Y____ N____

How many units?
Are these units being used?

23) Is a person from the Bureau of Attendance assigned to this school?
Y____ N____

What are his/her duties?

How is this coordinated with the rest of the school's program?

24) Have there been any directives from the Division of High Schools regarding attendance? (Get copies)
Y____ N____

Regarding programs for drop-outs? (Get copies)
Y____ N____

25) Do you have any unmatched transfers? Y____ N____

How many?________________________

PHONE INTERVIEW - DISTRICT COORDINATOR

1) What are your attendance-related responsibilities?

How much time do you spend on attendance-related activities?

What are your other responsibilities?

Does anyone else on the district staff have attendance-related responsibilities?

2) Is there a district attendance plan? Y____ N____
Could you please send me a copy?
Who wrote it?
When?

Who was consulted about the design of the plan?
Was it submitted to the Bureau of Attendance?
Y____ N____ When?
Was it reviewd by the Chancellor's Task Force to your knowledge?
Y____ N____ Were any comments made? Y____ N____

3) Did the district do a needs assessment?
Y____ N____

What information was collected?
Did the schools submit information?
Y____ N____ Specifiy

Did you consider the school attendance plans before designing a district plan? Y_____ N____

4) Have there been any ditrict-wide meetings on attendance in the last year? Y____ N____

Who attended?
Principals? Y____ N____ When?

Attendance coordinators? Y____ N____ When? Others? Y____ N____
When?

5) Has the district provided any in-service training related to attendance matters? Y____ N____ When? Who attended? (Titles)

6) Did you reivew the attendance plans of district schools?
Y____ N____ How?

7) What is your reslationship with the Bureau of Attendance?
Has anyone from BOA visited the district? Y____ N____ Who?

Has anyone from the Chancellor's Task Force visited the district?
Y____ N____ When? Who?

8) Comments____

Addendum to District Attendance Coordinator Questionnaire:

1) How many atendance teachers are there in the district?

2) How much time do they spend in the field?

3) What is the case load of each attendance teacher?

4) How many students are found and returned to school?

APPENDIX B

Profiles of Schools Included in Survey

District/ Borough	School	Register Fall 1978	Average Daily Attendance 1978-1979	Ethnicity[1] Black/Hispanic/Other	Title I Status	% Below Grade Level in Reading Achievement, June 1979
3	IS 44	1,153	87.86 %	37.0/36.2/26.8 %	No	-
5	JHS 136	850	81.12	98.7/ 1.3/ 0.0	Yes	74.5 %
7	IS 162	863	82.32	33.8/65.1/ 1.0	Yes	79.3
8	IS 174	1,377	82.38	40.2/55.9/ 4.0	Yes	70.6
10	IS 115	908	82.12	23.7/70.9/ 5.4	Yes	79.0[2]
11	IS 144	1,134	87.29	54.7/20.6/24.7	No	48.8
13	JHS 265	1,274	82.69	81.2/17.5/ 1.3	Yes	75.7
15	JHS 136	1,231	83.48	2.2/86.3/11.6	Yes	62.4
18	JHS 68	1,557	84.81	22.8/ 4.6/72.7	No	38.7
20	JHS 62	1,775	83.09	33.6/24.5/41.9	No	57.1
21	JHS 281	1,532	81.02	21.3/10.1/68.5	No	54.2
23	JHS 275	863	82.77	89.1/10.8/ .1	Yes	71.0
25	JHS 25	1,678	89.95	14.7/ 4.3/81.0	No	27.8
26	JHS 216	1,040	91.96	27.4/ 3.4/69.2	No	19.1
28	IS 142	602	80.86	95.5/ 4.5/ 0.0	Yes	78.6
30	JHS 126	1,127	84.88	40.1/21.7/38.1	Yes	66.3
31	IS 51	1,494	87.85	7.3/ 5.5/87.2	No	38.2
						% PSEN Eligible, Fall 1979
Manh.	Louis D. Brandeis	4,219	78.77	44.4/51.9/ 3.7	Yes	68.07
Manh.	Washington Irving	2,397	73.52	45.7/43.2/11.1	Yes	57.24
Bronx	James Monroe	2,770	70.98	33.1/66.4/ 0.5	Yes	66.87
Bkln.	Alexander Hamilton Voc	1,259	82.62	82.3/16.5/ 1.2	Yes	54.79
Bkln.	Edward R. Murrow	2,849	86.75	24.3/13.8/62.0	No	12.40
Bkln.	John Jay	4,496	63.67	20.6/49.7/29.7	Yes	58.60
Bkln.	William E. Grady Voc	2,174	79.37	16.4/ 7.8/75.8	Yes	31.49
Queens	Forest Hills	2,397	86.65	28.7/10.4/60.9	No	22.75
Queens	Queens Vocational	1,292	81.37	17.4/14.3/68.3	No	36.70
S.I.	Tottenville	4,927	85.23	3.0/ 3.0/93.0	No	16.42
Manh.	West Side Alternative	313	71.35	51.1/23.2/25.6	Yes	-

Source: New York City Board of Education, Metropolitan Educational Laboratory

[1] Errors due to rounding

[2] 10% or more of the students in this school were excused from the New York City Testing Program for reason of limited English proficiency.

APPENDIX C

Programming for the Truant

"The objectives of an educational program for potential dropouts are, in general, the same as the educational objectives for all students. The youngster who is a potential dropout is being educated so as to make the greatest use of his abilities to satisfy his own needs as well as the demands of the society in which he lives."[1]

Because truants have varying needs and abilities, programs which attempt to address these needs must be comprehensive, flexible and responsive. There have been many studies conducted in an attempt to understand the needs of truants and to isolate those components which would make for successful programming. A significant number of researchers concur that responsive programming must include:

A Useful Recording Mechanism which would allow for the development of indices which could be used to predict the development of truanting behaviors.

Committed Staff - Several studies have shown that the staff, particularly the teacher is the focal point around which any school program must be built.[2] Particularly, Beard[3] found that "teachers' attitudes many times determine the success or failure of most educational ventures."

In programs for truants with unique needs, teachers and other staff who work directly with the truant must be carefully selected. Criteria for selection of teachers might include:

-- good relationship with students and staff

-- willingness to serve as advocate for students

-- possession of excellent skills in creating a classroom atmosphere that permits student participation

-- use of creative and innovative teaching methods and techniques

-- energetic discharge of teaching responsibilities

-- believes and is enthusiastic towards the goals and objectives of the program.

A Functional Curriculum - Truants, like all students, need good basic skills, particularly because many truants veiw the education received in public schools as directly preparing them for jobs. Also because many have significant gaps, a focus on basic skills is essential. It has been suggested in the literature that staff review the curriculum to ensure that it is vital, well organized, functional and based on need, interest and ability of the target population. Flexible scheduling and utilization of community resources related to cultural vocational and career interest were also suggested.[4]

Staff Training - Irwin[5] found that there is a need for the potential dropout to be liked and respected and made to feel worthwhile by adults. Since the key adults encountered in the school by students seem to be the teacher, it is essential that their attitude be positive. Beard has suggested that training be provided which would include an understanding of effective basic skill teaching techiques and the use of techniques and devices for dealing with disciplinary and emotional problems in the classroom.

Student Involvement - Wilson[6] found that participation in school activities was found to be a factor related to whether or not a student finished high school. It also is essential that students have opportunities to participate in activities, extracurricular or academic, in which they are able to experience some measure of success and enjoyment which generally in turn generate feelings of self-worth. When asked to account for the relative success of this program, the Principal of Edward R. Murrow responded that a very important factor was that the majority of his students were involved in one or more of the numerous clubs sponsored by the school. These club activities ranged from horticulture to sculpturing and offer an opportunity for students to participate in something they enjoyed and were good at. This, in turn, he continued, resulted in feelings of identification with the school. Students also need to be involved in the process of decision making and be well informed concerning the rules and limits of the program.

A Counseling Component - Educational, Vocational and personal adjustment counseling have been identified as areas in which counseling should be focused. There are programs including West Side High School which utilizes the teacher in a dual role of Counselor/Teacher. In this role, the teacher generally serves as a type of surrogate parent. This approach might be more appropriate for retrieval rather than prevention programs.

Community Liaison - Community liaison workers indigenous wherever possible should be included in the design of the program. Their responsibilities would include reaching out to parents through home visits, recreational and supportive type activities; help to accomodate meetings between parents, teachers, students, counselors and administrators around needs of the student; also help to canvass the other community agencies in other sectors such as business and labor.

Involve the Marketplace - Business and labor should be involved in providing work experiences that are correlated with school experiences and will directly tie in to full employment. Beard[7] developed a technique for involving the business community.

Parent Involvement - Parents should be involved as much as is possible. Information on program policy should be shared so that they can assist their children in making informed decisions. Support services should also be provided to parents or refersals to appropriate agencies. Parents should also be recruited wherever possible as volunteers and their input into the program should be aggressively sought.

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[1] Block, Eve E. and others, Failing Students Failing Schools. A Study of Dropout and Discipline in New York State. New York Civil Liberties Union. April, 1978.

[2] Black, Arthur, " Profile of High School Dropouts", Dissertation Abstract International, 36:7760-A, 1975.

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New York City Board of Education, Interrupted Education: Students Who Drop Out, Project #5003-95401, September, 1979, pp.30-31.

[3] Beard, Samuel P., The Design and Implementation of a Program to Reduce the Number of Dropouts in Inner City Schools, Ed.D. Practicum Nova University, May, 1978, pp. 13, 21.

[4] Beard, Samuel P., The Design and Implementation of a Program to Reduce the Number of Dropouts in Inner City Schools, Ed.D. Practicum Nova University, May, 1978, p. 12.

De Leonibus, Nancy, "Absenteeism, the Perpetual Problem", The Practitioner, Vol. V, No. 1, October, 1978.

[5] Irwin, James R., "Doubters, Delinquents and Dropouts. Can They Be Helped Through Improved Self Concepts?" National Association of Secondary School Principals. Anaheim, California, February 10-15, 1978.

[6] Wilson, Aaron, Jr., Development and Implementation of a Structural Program for the Systematic Reduction of Factors Contributing to Students Dropping Out of School, September, 1977.

[7] Beard, Samuel P., The Design and Implementation of a Program to Reduce the Number of Dropouts in Inner City Schools, Ed.D. Practicum Nova University, May, 1978.

HOW THE COMMUNITY CAN HELP: AN ILLUSTRATION

The Park Slope/Red Hook area of Brooklyn, which includes Planning Board #6 and School District #15, is also the primary catchment areas for John Jay High School, one of the high schools designated by the Division of High Schools as a priority school in terms of the truancy/dropout problem.

The community contains the following agencies that already provide truancy/dropout - related services to adolescents.

1. Children and Youth Development Services (CYDS)

   Job development for 500 youth per year at a placement rate of 300-350 per year.

   Recreation including afterschool and evening programs in a drop-in center as well as camping weekends and free access to cultural and athletic events.

   Counseling including socialization and therapeutic groups, school advocacy and, at the local police precinct crisis intervention.

   Education a Community Service Project with John Jay High School students.

   Three mini schools co-sponsored with the Board of Education. The schools serve 120 young people between the ages of 11 and 16.

2. Family Reception Center

   Counseling on a family, individual and group basis includes psychiatric and psychological consultation as well as legal services and advocacy services in education, housing and welfare.

   Education Dance Theatre, Workshop, High School Equivalency classes.

3. Teen Parent Project

Counseling on personal development and parenting skills.

Education and Employment connecting the young people with high school and higher education opportunities as well as with employment programs.

4. CLEAR for youth

Education selected workshops including dance and creative writing.

Recreation

Youth leadership training

Counseling relating to gaining entrance to appropriate educational settings.

5. Eye of Red Hook

- Employment services
- Counseling services, especially regarding appropriate school placement.

6. Red Hook Pregnant Teenagers Project

- Counseling
- Employment
- Educational Placement services

7. Camp Friendship

- Recreational Services

8. Project Reach Youth

Education

- tutoring program for younger students.
- career exploration center - career and vocational aptitude and interest testing plus career counseling and exploration of career options.

Recreation

- Drop-In Center
- Joint recreation and facility utilization and planning.

While each program provides its own unique service, they do interface with each other both referring young people to each other's services and by forming coalitions on specific issues. Two such coalitions are:

The Park Slope Recreation Task Force
The Community Committee on Children
Out-of-School

The latter group is already working with a case load of more than 800 truants and dropouts.

There are a number of ways in which the Park Slope/Redhook agencies can complement the High School Division's truancy/dropout initiative. One way would be to replicate the jointly sponsored (Board of Education/CYDS) mini-schools on the high school level either within John Jay High School or in nearby space. The mini-schools that already exist are a model of shared responsibility and cost effectiveness. In the case of the largest of these, the I.S. 88 Annex, 60 youth, aged 11-16, are served by eight Board of Education teachers. CYDS contributes, at no charge to the Board of Education, the physical facility and the following personnel services:

1	Site Coordinator	@12,000	$12,000
3	Social Workers	@14,000	42,000
1	Part-time Learning Disabilities Specialist		2,500
2	Part-time psychiatric evaluation personnel		4,800
	Supplies		2,000
			$63,300

By interfacing this school annex with CYDS the Board is directly saving over $1,000 per student and receiving quality back-up services. Savings are far greater when you consider that CYDS is directly affiliated with the Park Slope Family Reception Center and the Park Slope Recreation and Employment Task Forces. Thus an extensive and varied matrix of community services are available to youth involved in this mini-school.

* * *

Although the Park Slope/Red Hook area is used in the above examples we have seen networks of community agencies that can provide services to truants and dropouts in other areas of the city as well. For example, John Simon has developed a coalition for this purpose on the upper west side of Manhattan, the N.W. Bronx Family Services has done so in the South Bronx and the Mini-Academy has the capability in central Harlem.

APPENDIX E

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